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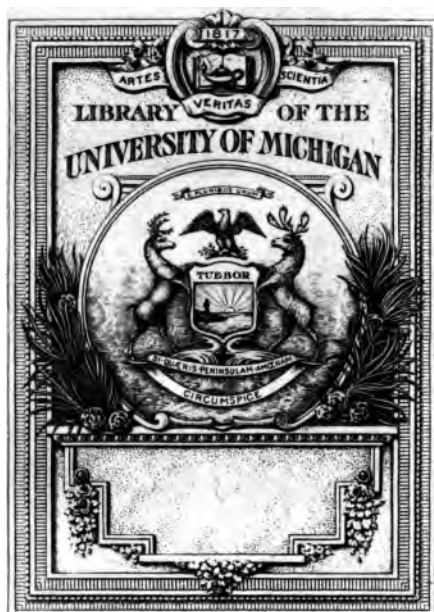
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Haywood, Mrs. Eliza (Fowler)

T H E

H I S T O R Y

O F

MISS BETSY THOUGHTLESS.

V O L. IV.

THE FOURTH EDITION.



L O N D O N :

Printed for L. GARDNER, opposite St. Clement's
Church in the Strand.

M.DCC.LXVIII.

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THE
HISTORY
OF
MISS BETSY THOUGHTLESS.

C A P I

*Contains, among other particulars, an example of
forgiving goodness and generosity, worthy the
imitation of as many as shall read it.*



THE constraint Miss Betsy
had put on herself, while in
the presence of the com-
pany she had been with,
had been extremely painful
to her; but when she got
home she gave a loose to tears, that com-
mon relief of sorrows: — yet amidst all
VOL. IV. B those

these testimonies of a violent affection for Mr. Truworth, she would not allow herself to imagine, that she was possessed of any for him, — nor that the vexation she was in proceeded from any other motive, than that of finding a heart, that had once been devoted to her, capable of submitting to the charms of any other woman.

All she could bring herself to acknowledge, was only that she had been very much to blame, in treating the proposals of Mr. Truworth in the light manner she had done; — she now wondered at herself for having been so blind to the merits of Mr. Truworth's family, estate, person, and accomplishments, and accused herself with the utmost severity, for having rejected, what she could not but confess would have been highly for her interest, honour, and happiness to have accepted.

Thus deeply was she buried in a torlate repentance, when a letter was brought to her, the superscription of which wrote in a hand altogether unknown her; — on opening it, she found the contents as follows:

MISS BETSY THOUGHTLESS. 3

Marshall'sa Prison.

TO MISS BETSY THOUGHTLESS.

‘ MADAM,

‘ **A**FTER the just, though severe re-
‘ solution your last informed me
‘ you had taken, of never seeing, nor re-
‘ ceiving any thing from me more, I
‘ tremble to approach you.—Fearing you
‘ would not vouchsafe to open this, know-
‘ ing from whence it came, I got a person
‘ to direct it for you, and cannot assure
‘ myself you will, even now, examine the
‘ contents so far, as to see the motive
‘ which emboldens me to give you this
‘ trouble.

‘ I have long since rendered myself un-
‘ worthy of your friendship ;—it is solely
‘ your compassion and charity that I now
‘ implore : — the date of this petition, in
‘ part, will shew the calamity I labour
‘ under. — I have languished in this
‘ wretched prison for upwards of a month,
‘ for debts my luxury contracted, and
‘ which I vainly expected would be dis-
‘ charged by those who called themselves
‘ my admirers ; but, alas ! all the return
‘ they make for favours they so ardently
‘ requested, is contempt.—I have been
‘ obliged to make away with every thing

B 2

‘ their

4 THE HISTORY OF

‘ their gallantry bestowed, for my support.
‘ port.

‘ All the partners of my guilty pleasures, all those who shared with me in
‘ my riots, are deaf to my complaints, and
‘ refuse a pitying ear to the distress
‘ they have in a great measure contributed
‘ to bring upon me.——My creditors,
‘ more merciful than my friends or lovers,
‘ have consented to withdraw their actions,
‘ and I shall have my discharge on paying
‘ the fees of this loathsome prison ; —
‘ three guineas will be sufficient to restore
‘ my liberty, which, if I am so fortunate
‘ once more to obtain, I will think
‘ no labour, though ever so hard or abject,
‘ too much, if it can enable me to
‘ drag on my remains of life in true penitence.”

‘ Dear madam, if by favouring me with
‘ the sum I mention, you are so good as to
‘ open my prison gates, heaven will, I
‘ doubt not, reward the generous bounty ;
‘ and if the Almighty will vouchsafe to
‘ hear the prayers of an abandoned creature
‘ like me, I shall never cease to invoke
‘ his choicest blessings may be showered
‘ down on the head of my charming deliverer.

‘ I shall

MISS BETSY THOUGHTLESS. 9

‘ I shall send to-morrow morning a
‘ poor honest woman, whom I can con-
‘ fide in, for your answer. — I beseech
‘ you to be assured, that if once freed
‘ from this detested place, no temptations
‘ of what kind soever shall ever prevail
‘ upon me to return to my yet more de-
‘ tested former course of life, and am de-
‘ termined to fly to some remote corner
‘ of the kingdom, as distant from London
‘ as from L——e, and there en-
‘ deavour to earn a wretched pittance, by
‘ means how low soever I care not. —
‘ Your grant of the request I make you
‘ at this time, will save both the soul
‘ and body of her, who is;

‘ With the most unfeigned contrition,

‘ MADAM,

Your most humble,

‘ And most unfortunate servant,

‘ A. FORWARD’.

Utterly impossible was it for this un-
happy creature to have sent her petition at
a more unlucky time : — Miss Betsy, full
of the idea of the misfortune she had sus-
tained in the loss of Mr. Truworth, could

6 THE HISTORY OF

not be reminded of Miss Forward, without being also reminded, that the first occasion of his disgust was owing to her acquaintance with that woman.

‘ Infamous creature !’ cried Miss Betsey as soon as she had done reading ; — ‘ she deserves no compassion from the world, much less from me. — No, — no, — there are but too many objects of charity to be found, and I shall not lavish the little bounty I am able to bestow, on a wretch like her.’

These were the first reflections of Miss Betsey, on receiving so unexpected a petition, but they soon subsided, and gave way to others of a more gentle nature ; — ‘ Yet,’ said she, ‘ if the poor wretch is sensible of her faults, and truly resolved to do as she pretends, it would be the utmost cruelty to deny her the means of fulfilling the promise she makes of amendment.’

‘ How unhappy is our sex,’ continued she, ‘ either in a too much, or too little sensibility of the tender passion ! — she was, alas ! too easily influenced by the flatteries of the base part of mankind, and I too little grateful to the merits of *the best.*’

In fine, the natural goodness of her disposition got the ascendancy over all considerations that opposed the grant of Miss Forward's request. — 'My acquaintance with her has been fatal to me,' said she; 'but that was less owing to her fault than my own folly.'

Accordingly she sent by the woman, who came next morning, as mentioned in the letter, four guineas enclosed in a piece of paper, and wrote to her in these terms:

To Miss FORWARD.

MADAM,

'THOUGH I cannot but look upon your misfortunes as justly fallen on you, yet heartily commiserate them: — if your penitence is sincere, I doubt not but you will some way or other be enabled to pursue a more laudable course of life, than that which has brought you into this distress. — I add one guinea to the sum you requested, and wish it were in my power to do more, being

'Your real well-wisher,

'And humble servant,

E. THOUGHTLESS'

8 THE HISTORY OF

Though no one could have more refined notions of virtue, nor a greater abhorrence for vice, than this young lady, yet did she never hate the persons of the guilty, nor would judge with that severity of their faults, which some others, much less innocent, are apt to do.

It pleased her to think, that by this donation she should gladden the heart of an afflicted person, who had been of her acquaintance, how unworthy soever of late she had rendered herself; and this little interruption of her meditations contributed a good deal to compose her mind, after the sudden shock it had sustained on the score of Mr. Trueworth's marriage.

But she had very shortly another, and more agreeable relief; — Sir Ralph and lady Trusty came to town; — which she no sooner was informed of, and where a house had been taken for their reception, than she went early the next morning to pay her respects, and testify the real satisfaction she conceived at their arrival.

Nothing of business would probably have been said to her on this first visit, if her two brothers had not come in immediately after. — The first compliments on
such

such an occasion being over, —— ‘ Sir
 ‘ Ralph, said the elder Mr. Thoughtless,
 ‘ we have wished for your coming to
 ‘ town on many accounts, but none so
 ‘ much as that of my sister, who is going
 ‘ to be married, and has only waited to
 ‘ intreat you will do her the favour of dis-
 ‘ posing of her hand.’

The good Baronet replied, that there
 was nothing he should do with greater
 pleasure, provided it were to a person
 worthy of her. —— ‘ That, Sir,’ said
 the elder Mr. Thoughtless, ‘ we have taken
 ‘ care to be convinced of, and I doubt
 ‘ not but you will think as we do, when
 ‘ you shall be informed of the particulars.’
 --- Miss Betsy blushed, but uttered not a
 word, either to oppose, or to agree to what
 had been said.

Lady Trusty perceiving her in some
 confusion, led her into another room, in
 order to talk seriously to her, on many
 things she had in her head.



C H A P. II.

Is very full of Business.

THE two brothers of Miss Betsy having some reason to apprehend, she would still find some pretence, if possible, to evade fulfilling the promise she had made them, in regard to Mr. Munden, and also, that he, finding himself trifled with, might become weary of prosecuting so unavailing a suit, and break off as Mr. Trueworth had done, resolved to omit nothing in their power for bringing to a conclusion an affair, which seemed to them so absolutely necessary for securing the honour of their family, in that of their sister.

They suspected that their putting off the marriage 'till the arrival of Sir Ralph and lady Trusty, was only to gain time, and invent some excuse to get that lady on her side :—they therefore judged it highly proper to acquaint her previously with the motives, which made them so impatient to see their sister disposed of, and by that means prevent her ladyship from being

MISS BETSY THOUGHTLESS. 11

ing prepossessed by any ideas the other might prepare for that purpose.

Accordingly, Mr. Francis Thoughtless having been informed by letter, of the day in which they intended to be in town, he went on horseback, and met them at the inn where they dined, about twenty miles from London.

That good lady was so much troubled at the recital he made her of Miss Betsy's late adventures, that she could not forbear letting fall some tears; and though she laid the blame of her ill conduct chiefly on her having lived so long under the tuition and example of a woman such as lady Mellasin; yet she could not but allow there was a certain vanity in her composition, as dangerous to virtue, as to reputation, and that marriage was the only defence for both.

Sir Ralph, who was an extreme facetious, good-natured man, was a little pleasant on what his lady had said on this occasion.—— ‘ You forgot, my dear,’ cried he, ‘ how many ladies of late have broke the conjugal hoop, and think themselves justified in doing so, by having been prevailed upon to enter into it without

‘ inclination. — Remember the words of
 ‘ the humorous poet Hudibras :

“ Wedlock without love, some say,
 “ Is but a lock without a key ;
 “ And ’tis a kind of rape to marry
 “ One, who neglects, cares not for ye ;
 “ For what does make it ravishment,
 “ But being ’gainst the mind’s consent.”

‘ Does Miss Betsy,’ continued he, to
 Mr. Francis, ‘ love the gentleman you
 ‘ would have her marry ?’ — To which
 the other replied, ‘ That the temper of
 ‘ his sister was too capricious for any one
 ‘ to be able to judge of the real situation
 ‘ of her heart, or even for herself to be
 ‘ perfectly assured of it.

He then proceeded to inform him how
 long Mr. Munden had courted her, and
 of the great encouragement she had al-
 ways given to his addresses ; — her sub-
 mitting the decision of the affair to the
 elder Mr. Thoughtless’s inspection into the
 circumstances of his estate, which being
 found agreeable to the report made of it,
 she now only waited, or pretended to wait,
 for the approbation of Sir Ralph, as be-
 ing by her father’s will constituted her
 guardian.

‘ Well

‘ Well then ’ said Sir Ralph, ‘ since it
 ‘ is so, and you are all desirous it should
 ‘ be a match, I shall not fail to give my
 ‘ verdict accordingly.’

As impatient as the two brothers were to see her married, and out of the way of those temptations she at present lay under, they could not be more so than lady Trusty now was ; ---she doubted not, that the virtue and good sense of that young lady, would render her a very good wife, when once she was made one, and therefore heartily wished to see her settled in the world, even though it were to less advantage, than her beauty, and the many good qualities she was possessed of might entitle her to expect.

It was in order to do every thing in her power to bring about what she thought so good a work, that she had drawn Miss Betsy from the company, and retired with her into the closet, in the manner already related.

Miss Betsy, who knew nothing of all this, or even that her brother had gone to meet them on the road, was extremely surprized to find by the discourse, with which lady Trusty entertained her, that

no

no part of what had happened to her, ever since the death of Mr. Goodman, was a secret to her ladyship.

She presently saw, however, it must be by her brother Frank, that this intelligence had been given, and was not at all at a loss to guess the motive of his having done it. — ‘I find, Madam,’ said she, ‘that all the errors and inadvertencies I have been guilty of are betrayed to you, and am far from being sorry they are so, since the gentle reproofs you take the trouble to give me, are so many fresh marks, of the friendship with which you vouchsafe to honour me, and which I shall always esteem as my greatest happiness. — I flatter myself, however,’ continued she, ‘that the remembrance of what has lately befallen me, and the imminent dangers I have escaped, will enable me to regulate my conduct in such a manner as to give your ladyship no farther pain on my account.’

Lady Trusty on this embraced her with the utmost tenderness, and told her, that there were few things she either wished or hoped for with greater ardency, than to see her happily settled, and freed from all temptations of what kind soever.

This

This worthy lady then fell on the subject of Mr. Munden, and recapitulated all the arguments which had been already urged, to persuade her to come to a determination : — in fine, she left nothing unsaid, that was suitable to the occasion.

Miss Betsy listened to her with the most submissive attention, and after a short pause, replied in these terms :—‘ Madam,’ said she, ‘ I am convinced by my own reason, as well as by what your ladyship has been pleased to say, that I have indeed gone too far with Mr. Munden to be able to go back with honour ; and since I find he has the approbation of all my friends, shall no longer attempt to trifle with his pretensions.’

‘ You will marry him then ?’ cried lady Trusty. — ‘ Yes, madam,’ answered Miss Betsy ; and added, though not without some hesitation, ‘ since my marriage is a thing so much desired by those, to whose will I shall always be ready to submit, Mr. Munden has certainly a right to expect I should decide in his favour.’

She said no more, but hung down her head, and Lady Trusty was going to make some reply, — perhaps to ask how far
her

her heart acquiesced in the consent her tongue had given, but was prevented by Sir Ralph, who pushing open the door of the room where they were, told her, she engrossed his fair charge too long ; — that it was now time for himself, and her brothers to have some share in their conversation.

‘ Some polite wives, Sir Ralph,’ said Lady Trusty, laughing, ‘ would not have excused so abrupt a breaking in upon their privacy, and I assure you, if you had interrupted us a moment sooner, you might have spoiled all ; for Miss Betsey has but just given me her promise to marry Mr. Munden.’

‘ I should have been heartily sorry indeed,’ said he, ‘ if my over zeal had rendered me a Marplot on this occasion ; — but come,’ continued he, ‘ since the young lady has at last resolved, let us carry the joyful news to her brothers.’

In speaking these words he gave one of his hands to lady Trusty, and the other to Miss Betsey, and led them into the dining room, where the Mr. Thoughtlesses were ; — ‘ Well, gentlemen,’ said he, ‘ your sister has at last consented to give you a brother,

MISS BETSY THOUGHTLESS. 17

‘brother, — pray thank her for the addition she is going to make to your family.’

‘I hope,’ said the elder Mr. Thoughtless, ‘she will find her own happiness in doing so.’ — The younger added something to the same purpose. — After this the conversation turned chiefly on the solid satisfaction of a married life, in which Miss Betsy took but little part, only saying to her two brothers : — ‘Well, — since both of you have so high an opinion of matrimony, and will needs have me, who am by some years younger than either of you, lead the way, I hope I shall soon see you follow the example.’

‘Our elder brother, said Mr. Francis, may, doubtless, marry whenever he pleases; and as for my part, when it can be proved that I have an offer made me equally advantageous to what you have rejected, and I should refuse it, I could not be angry with the world for condemning my want of judgement.’

‘No more of that,’ cried Sir Ralph ; — ‘you see she hears reason at last,’ — Lady Trusty would fain have persuaded the gentlemen to stay dinner there, but they
excused

excused themselves, as expecting company at home, and said, if possible they would return towards evening ; — she would not however permit Miss Betsey to take leave, and her continuing there that whole day happened to bring things somewhat sooner to a conclusion, than perhaps they otherwise would have been.

Mr. Munden, as soft and complaisant as he carried it to Miss Betsey, was very much disgusted in his mind at her late behaviour ; — he found she loved him not, and was far from having any violent inclination for her himself ; but the motives, which had made him persevere in his courtship, after being convinced of the indifference she had for him, made him also impatient to bring the affair to as speedy a result as possible. — Sir Ralph was the last person to whom she had referred the matter ; — he had heard by accident of that gentleman's arrival, and went to her lodgings, in order to see in what manner she would now receive him ; but not finding her at home, called at the house of Mr. Thoughtless, who had always been very propitious to his suit.

On the two brothers returning from Sir Ralph's, they met him just coming out of the house : — the elder desired him to
walk

MISS BETSY THOUGHTLESS. 19

walk in, — told him, with a great deal of freedom, that Sir Ralph was come to town ; — that the business having been communicated to him, he approved of the match, and his sister had consented. — Mr. Munden received this information with all the seeming transport of a man passionately in love : — he made them a thousand retributions for the part they had taken in his interest, and they expressed no less satisfaction in the accomplishment of his desires. — After some few compliments on both sides, the elder Mr. Thoughtless informed him, that Miss Betsy was to stay the whole day with Sir Ralph and Lady Trufty ; — that himself and brother had promised to return thither in the evening, and that he should be glad if he would accompany them, in order that when they were all together every thing might be settled for the completion of the nuptials.

It is not to be doubted but that the lover readily embraced this proposition, and an hour for his waiting on them being prefixed, he took his leave, the company that was to dine with Mr. Thoughtless that instant coming in.

CHAP.



C H A P. III.

Will not let the reader fall asleep.

I Believe the reader will easily perceive, that it was owing to the apprehensions of Miss Betsy's fluctuating disposition, that her brothers testified so great an impatience for bringing the affair of her marriage to a conclusion; and also, that it was to confirm her in her resolution, and reconcile her to the promise she had made, that lady Trusty had kept her with her that whole day.

The arguments urged by that worthy lady, — the obliging and chearful manner in which they were delivered, joined to the facetious and entertaining remarks, which Sir Ralph had occasionally made, had indeed a great effect, for the present, on the too wavering and uncertain mind they were intended to fix.

Though she was far from expecting Mr. Munden could come that evening with her brothers, or even from imagining he could as yet be informed of what had passed in his favour; yet she was not displeased

MISS BETSY THOUGHTLESS. 21

pleased when she saw him enter; and if she looked a little confounded, it was rather to be attributed to modesty than anger.

That gentleman having made his first compliments to Sir Ralph and lady Trusty, on his being presented to them, flew directly to Miss Betsy, and expressed his sense of the happiness her brothers had made him hope, in terms, the most passionate that words could form; — she received what she said to her, on this occasion, with a sweetness which must have infinitely charmed a heart truly sensible of the tender passion, — that even Mr. Munden, though less delicate than he pretended, could not but be greatly affected with it.

In fine, the behaviour of both towards each other, gave great contentment to all the friends of Miss Betsy; and her elder brother, for form's sake, recapitulating the proposal of Mr. Munden, concerning her settlement and jointure, Sir Ralph gave that approbation in public, which he before had done in private: — the intended bridegroom and Mr. Thoughtless agreed to go together the next morning to Mr. Markland the lawyer, and give him the
necessary

necessary instructions for drawing up the marriage articles.

They broke not up company 'till the night was pretty far advanced, and Mr. Thoughtless not having his own coach there, a hackney set them all down at their respective habitations.

Thus far all went extremely well: — the parties chiefly concerned seemed perfectly satisfied with each other, and with themselves, for the agreement they had mutually entered into, and there appeared not the least likelihood of any future difficulty that would arise to interrupt, or delay the consummation of the so much desired nuptials.

Miss Betty had not as yet had time to meditate on what she had given her promise to perform: — the joy she found her compliance had given all her friends, — the endearing things they said to her upon the occasion, and the transport Mr. Munden had expressed, on seeing himself so near the end of all his wishes, had kept up her spirits, and she imagined, while in their presence, that her inclination had dictated the consent her lips had uttered.

But

But when she was alone, — shut up in her own apartment; — when she no longer received the kind careffes of her smiling friends, nor the flattering raptures of her future husband, all the lively ideas, which their conversation and manner of behaviour towards her had inspired, vanished at once, and gave place to fancies, which might justly bear the name of splenetic.

‘ I must now look upon myself,’ said she, ‘ as already married : — I have promised, — it is too late to think of retracting. — A few days hence, I suppose, will oblige me to the performance of my promise, and I may say with Monimia in the play :

“ I have bound up for myself a weight of cares,
 “ And how the burthen will be borne, none
 “ knows.”

‘ I wonder,’ continued she, ‘ what can make the generality of women so fond of marrying ? — It looks to me like an insaturation. — Just as if it were not a greater pleasure to be courted, complimented, admired, and addressed by a number, than be confined to one, who from a
 ‘ slave.

‘ slave becomes a master; and perhaps
 ‘ uses his authority in a manner disagree-
 ‘ able enough.’

‘ And yet it is expected from us. —
 ‘ One has no sooner left off one’s bib and
 ‘ apron, than people cry, — ‘ Miss will
 ‘ soon be married,” — and this man,
 ‘ and that man, is presently picked out
 ‘ for a husband. — Mighty ridiculous ! —
 ‘ they want to deprive us of all the plea-
 ‘ sures of life, just when one begins to
 ‘ have a relish for them.’

In this humour she went to bed, nor did sleep present her with images more pleasing; — sometimes she imagined herself standing on the brink of muddy, troubled waters; — at others, that she was wandering through deserts, overgrown with thorns and briars, or seeking to find a passage through some ruin’d building, whose tottering roof seemed ready to fall upon her head, and crush her to pieces.

These gloomy representations, amidst her broken slumbers, when vanished, left behind them an uncommon heaviness upon her waking mind : — she rose, — but it was only to throw herself into a chair, where she sat for a considerable time,

time, like one quite stupid and dead to all sensations of every kind.

At last remembering, that they were all to dine at her brother's that day by appointment, she roused herself as well as she was able, and started from the posture she had been in: — 'I see I am at the end of all my happiness,' said she, 'and that my whole future life is condemned to be a scene of disquiet; — but there is no resisting destiny, — they will have it so; — I have promised, and must submit.'

On opening a little cabinet, in which she always kept those things she most valued, in order to take out some ornaments to put on that day, the picture of Mr. Truworth stared her in the face. — 'Ah!' said she, taking it up, and looking attentively upon it, 'if my brother Frank and lady Trusty had been in town, when the original of this made his addresses to me, I should then, as now, have been compelled to have given my hand. — It is likely too I should have yielded with the same reluctance. — Blinded by my vanity, — led by mistaken pride, — I had not considered the value I ought to have set upon his love. — He had not then done

' any thing for me more than any other
 ' man, who pretended courtship to me,
 ' would have done. — I know not how
 ' it is, I did not then think him half so
 ' agreeable as I now find he is. — What
 ' a sweetness is there in these eyes !' cried
 she, still, looking on the picture. ———
 ' ———What an air of dignity in every fea-
 ' ture ! — Wit, — virtue, ———bravery, ———
 ' generosity, ———and every amiable quality
 ' that can adorn mankind, methinks are
 ' here compris'd.'

' But to what purpose do I now see all
 ' these perfections in him !' went she on.
 ' ---He is the right of another ; --- he has
 ' given himself to one, who knows better
 ' than my unhappy self to do justice to
 ' such exalted merit : ---- he thinks no
 ' more of me, and I must henceforth think
 ' no more of him.'

She ended these words with a deep sigh,
 and some tears, then laid the picture up,
 and endavoured to compose herself as
 well as she could.

She was but just drest when Mr. Mun-
 den came to wait on her, and conduct
 her to her brother's, where they were to
 dine : ---- he told her he had been with
 the elder Mr. Thoughtless at the lawyer's
 about

about the writings; — ‘so that now, my
‘angel,’ said he, ‘I flatter myself that my
‘days of languishment are near a period.’

He took the freedom of accompanying
these words with a pretty warm embrace,
— ‘Forbear,’ Mr. Munden,’ cried she,
with the most forbidding coldness; — ‘you
‘have yet no right to liberties of this
‘nature.’

‘Cruel and unkind Miss Betsy!’ re-
sumed he; — ‘must nothing then be al-
‘lowed to love, and all be left to law?’
— He then went on with some discourses
of the passion he had for her, and the
joy he felt in the thoughts of his ap-
proaching happiness: — to all which she
made very short replies, ‘till at last it
came into her head to interrupt him in
the midst of a very tender exclamation,
by saying, — ‘Mr. Munden, I forgot to
‘mention one thing to you, but it is not
‘yet too late, — I suppose you design to
‘keep a coach?’

This a little startled him, and looking
upon her with a very grave air, — ‘Ma-
‘dam,’ said he, ‘you are sensible my
‘estate will not permit me to oblige you
‘in this point.’ — ‘And can you imagine

‘I will ever marry to trudge on foot,’ cried she.

‘I should be both sorry and ashamed,’ replied he, ‘to see you do that; but there are other conveniencies, which will I hope content you, ’till fortune puts it in my power to do otherwise.’

He then reminded her of the expectations she had frequently heard him make mention of, concerning his hopes of soon obtaining, both an honourable and lucrative employment, and assured her, that as soon as he had procured a grant of it, he would set up an equipage accordingly.

But this did not at all satisfy her;—she insisted on having a coach directly, and gave him some hints, as if she would not marry without one, which very much nettling him, he desired she would remember her promise, which was absolutely given, without the least mention of a coach being made.

‘I would not have you,’ said she, ‘insist too much on that promise, lest I should be provoked to give you the same answer Leonora, in the play gives to her importunate lover :

‘ That

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- “ That boasted promise ties me not to time,
“ And bonds without a date, they say, are void.”

Mr. Munden could not now contain his temper; — he told her, he could not have expected such treatment, after his long services, and her favourable acceptance of them; — that he thought he merited, at least, a shew of kindness from her; and in fine, that she did not act towards him as became a woman of honour.

This was a reproach, which the spirit of Miss Betsy was too high to bear; — she blushing with indignation, and casting the most disdainful look upon him, was about to make some answer, which, perhaps, in the humour he then was, would have occasioned him to retort in such a manner, as might have broken off all the measures which had been so long concerting, if a sudden interruption had not prevented it.

Mr. Francis Thoughtless not knowing any thing of Mr. Munden's being there, and happening to pass that way, called on his sister to know if she was ready to go

to his brother's it being near dinner time; — he immediately perceived, by both their countenances, that some brulee had happened between them, and on his asking, in a gay manner the cause of it, Mr. Munden made no scruple to relate the sum of what had passed.—The brother of Miss Betsy, though in his heart very much vexed with her, affected to treat what Mr. Munden had said as a bagatelle, and calling to his sister's footman to get a hackney coach to the door, made them both go with him to his brother's, saying, they would there adjust every thing,



C H A P. IV.

Contains, among other particulars, certain bridal admonitions.

THOUGH Mr. Francis Thoughtless did not judge it convenient to reproach his sister in the presence of Mr. Munden, on the complaints of that gentleman; yet she had no sooner vented the little spleen she had been that instant possessed of, than she began to accuse herself of having been too poignant to a person, whom she had promised to make her husband.

To

To atone, therefore, for the severity of her late behaviour, — ‘ This is a good handsome clean hack,’ said she, with a smile ; — ‘ one would think my fellow had pitched on such a one on purpose, to keep me from regretting my not having one of my own.’

‘ I only wish, Madam,’ replied Mr. Munden, ‘ that you might be reconciled to such things as are in my power to accommodate you with, ’till I am so happy to present you with every thing you can desire.’ — ‘ Let us talk no more of that,’ cried she ; — ‘ be assured that whatever I may have said, I am far from thinking the happiness of life consists in grandeur.’

Mr. Munden, on these words, kissed her hand, and she permitted him to hold it between his, ’till they came out of the coach.

This, indeed, had been the very last effort of all the maiden pride and vanity of Miss Betsy, and Mr. Munden henceforward had no reason to complain of her behaviour towards him.

Sir Ralph Trusty, in regard to his age and character, had the honour of nominating the day for the celebration of their nuptials, and Miss Betsy made no excuses, or order to protract the time, but agreed with as much readiness, as her future bridegroom could have wished.

The good lady Trusty, as well as the two Mr. Thoughtlesses, however, being not yet able to assure themselves, that nothing was to be feared from the uncertainty of her temper, did every thing in their power to keep her in good humour with her fate; — and to their endeavours it may perhaps be ascribed, much more than to the force of her own resolution, that she ceased to be guilty of any thing that might give the least cause of discontent to Mr. Munden, or betray that which, in spite of all she could do, preyed upon herself.

To these assiduities of her friends, another motive might also be added, for the keeping up her spirits, which was that of her mind being continually employed; — Mr. Munden had taken a very handsome house; — the upholsterer received all the orders for the furnishing it from her; — there were besides many other things necessary

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cessary for the rendering it compleat, that were not in his province to supply ; — the going, therefore, to shops and warehouses for that purpose, took a very great part of her time. — What could be spared from these, and some other preparations for her wedding, either lady Trusty, or her brothers, had the address to engage : — one or other of them were always with her, 'till the night was far advanced, and sleep became more welcome than any meditations she could indulge.

The appointed day at length arrived ; — she was conducted to the altar by Sir Ralph Trusty, where being met by Mr. Munden, the ceremony of marriage was performed, — none being present at it but lady Trusty, and her two brothers ; for as she could not have celebrated it with that pomp and eclat, agreeable to a woman of her humour, she had earnestly desired it might be done with all the privacy imaginable.

The indissoluble knot now tied, they proceeded to Pontac's where an elegant entertainment being prepared for them by Mr. Munden's orders, they dined, and afterwards went all together to a lodging Mr. Munden had hired for a small time,

in a little village five or six miles from London.

This he had done to oblige his bride, who had told him, she desired to be lost to the world, 'till the first discourse of their marriage should be over, to avoid the visits and congratulations of their friends on that occasion.

It would be needless to tell the reader, that there was a general scene of joy amidst this little company: — Mr. Munden expressed, and indeed felt, an infinity of transport, on having triumphed over so many difficulties, which had for a long time continually risen to impede his wishes. — The two Mr. Thoughtlesses were extremely overjoyed, on thinking a period was put to all their cares in relation to their sister: — lady Trusty also, and Sir Ralph looking on this marriage, as things were circumstanced, highly convenient for Miss Betsy, were very much pleased; so that it must necessarily follow, that an event, which cost so much pains to bring about, must occasion a general content in the minds of all those, who had so strenuously laboured for it.

Amidst this scene of joy, Miss Betsy herself was the only person whose countenance

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nance discovered the least pensiveness ; nor was her's any more than what might be attributed to the modesty of a virgin bride.

Lady Trusty however, who had observed her all day with an attentive eye, thought it proper to give her some admonitions, concerning her future behaviour, before she took her leave.

To this end, she drew her into another room, apart from the company, and having told her, she had something of moment to say to her, began to entertain her in the following manner :

• My dear child, said she, ' you are
• now, I fear, more through your compliance with the desires of your friends,
• than through your own inclination, entered into a state, the happiness of
• which greatly depends on the part you
• act in the first scenes of it : — there are
• some women, who think they can never testify too much fondness for their
• husbands, and that the name of wife is
• a sufficient sanction for giving a loose to
• the utmost excesses of an extravagant
• and romantic passion ; — but this is a
• weakness, which I am pretty certain
• you will stand in no need of my advice

' to guard against. — I am rather apprehensive of your running into a contrary extreme, equally dangerous to your future peace, as to that of your husband's — A constant and unmoved insensibility will in time chill the most warm affection, and perhaps raise suspicions in him of the cause, which would be terrible indeed; — beware, therefore, I conjure you, how you affect to despise, or treat with any marks of contempt, or even of too much coldness, a tenderness which he has a right to expect you should return in kind, as far at least as modesty and discretion will permit you to bestow.

' As to your conduct in family affairs.' continued this good lady, ' I would have you always confine yourself to such things, as properly appertain to your own province, never interfering with such as belong to your husband; — be careful to give to him all the rights of his place, and at the same time maintain your own, though without seeming to be too tenacious of them. — If any dispute happen to arise between you, concerning superiority, though in matters of the slightest moment, rather recede a little from your due, than contend too far; but let him see you yield
 ' more

‘ more to oblige him, than because you
‘ think yourself bound to do so.’

‘ Mr. Munden, I flatter myself, has
‘ every qualification to make you happy,
‘ and to shew that your friends, in ad-
‘ vising you to marry him, have not mis-
‘ led your choice ; but as perfection is not
‘ to be found on this side the grave, and
‘ the very best of us are not exempt from
‘ the frailties of human nature, whatever
‘ errors he may happen to fall into, as it
‘ does not become you to reprimand him,
‘ I wish you would never take notice you
‘ have observed them. — A man of the
‘ strictest honour and good sense may
‘ sometimes slip,—be guilty of some slight
‘ forgetfulness ; but then he will recover
‘ of himself, and be ashamed of his mis-
‘ take.—Whereas reproaches only serve
‘ to harden the indignant mind, and make
‘ it rather chuse to persevere in the vices
‘ it detests, than to return to the virtues it
‘ admires, if warned by the remonstrances
‘ of another.’

‘ But above all things,’ added she ‘ I
‘ would wish you to consider, that those
‘ too great gaieties of life you have hi-
‘ therto indulged, which, however inno-
‘ cent, could not escape censure while
‘ in

‘ in a single state, will now have a much worse aspect in a married one.’

‘ Mistake me not, my dear’ pursued she, after a pause, finding by Miss Betsy’s countenance, that what she had said on this score had stung her to the quick, ‘ I would not have you deprive yourself of those pleasures of life which are becoming your sex, your age, and character ; —there is no necessity that because you are a wife, you should become a mope : —I only recommend a proper medium in these things.’

Her Ladyship was going on, when Miss Betsy’s servants, whom she had ordered to bring such part of her baggage as she thought would be needful while she stayed in that place, came with it into the chamber; on which this kind adviser told her fair friend, that she would refer what she had farther to say on these subjects, till another opportunity.

Miss Betsy replied, that she would treasure up in her heart all the admonitions she should at any time be pleased to give her, and that she hoped her future conduct would demonstrate, that no part of what her Ladyship had said was lost upon her.

With

With these words they returned into the dining-room, and the close of day soon after coming on, Sir Ralph and his Lady, with the two Mr. Thoughtlesses, took leave of the bride and bridegroom, and came back to town.



C H A P. V.

Seems to demand, for more reasons than one, a greater share of attention than ordinary, in the perusal of it.

THE fair wife of Mr. Munden,—Miss Betsy now no more,—had promised nothing at the altar, that she was not resolved religiously to perform ;—she began seriously to consider on the duties of her place ;— she was ignorant of no part of them, and soon became fully convinced, that on a strict observance of them depended her honour, — her reputation, — her peace of mind, and, in fine, all that was dear to a woman of virtue and understanding.

To give the more weight to these reflections, she also called to her mind the long perseverance of Mr. Munden :—his
constant

constant assiduities to please to her ;—his patient submitting to all the little caprices of her humour ; and establishing in herself an assured belief of the ardour and sincerity of his affection for her, her gratitude, her good nature, and good sense, much more than compensated for the want of inclination ; — and without any of those languishments,—those violent emotions, which bear the name of love, rendered her capable of giving more real and more valuable proofs of that passion, than are sometimes to be found among those, who profess themselves, and are looked upon by the world as the most fond wives.

In spite of her endeavours, the thoughts of Mr. Trueworth would, however, sometimes come into her mind, but she repelled them with all her might ; and as the merits of that gentleman would, in reality admit of no comparison with any thing that Mr. Munden had to boast of, she laboured to overbalance the perfections of the one, by that tender and passionate affection, with which she flattered herself she now was, and always would be regarded by the other.

Thus happily disposed to make the bonds she had entered into easy to herself, and perfectly agreeable to the person
with

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with whom she was engaged, he had indeed a treasure in her beyond what he could ever have imagined, or her friends, from her former behaviour, had any reason to have expected; and had he been truly sensible of the value of the jewel he possessed, he would have certainly been compleatly blessed;—but happiness is not in the power of every one to enjoy, tho' heaven and fortune deny nothing to their wishes;—but of this hereafter.

At present, all was joy and transport on the side of the bridegroom;—all complaisance and sweetness on that of the bride;—their whole deportment to each other was such, as gave the most promising expectations of a lasting harmony between them, and gladdened the hearts of as many as saw it, and interested themselves in the felicity of either of them.

They continued but a few days in the retirement, which had been made choice of for the consummation of their nuptials:—Mr. Munden was naturally gay,--- loved company, and all the modish diversions of the times;—and his wife, who, as the whole course of this history has shewn, had been always fond of them to an excess, and whose humour, in this point, was very little altered by the change
of

of her condition, readily embraced the first proposal he made of returning to town, believing she shou'd now have courage enough to appear in public, without testifying any of that shamefacedness on account of her marriage, which she knew would subject her to the ridicule of those of her acquaintance, who had a greater share of assurance.

For a time this new married pair seemed to have no other thing in view than pleasure :—Mr. Munden had a numerous acquaintance,—his wife not a few ;—giving and receiving entertainments, as yet engrossed their whole attention ;—each smiling hour brought with it some fresh matter for satisfaction, and all was chearful, gay, and jocund.

But this was a golden dream, which could not be expected to be of any long continuance ; — the gaudy scene vanished at once, and soon a darkening gloom overspread the late enchanting prospect. — Mr. Munden's fortune could not support these constant expences ; — he was obliged to retrench somewhere, and not being of a humour to deny himself any of those amusements he was accustomed to abroad, he became excessively parsimonious at home, insomuch that the scanty allow-
ance

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ance she received from him for housekeeping would scarce furnish out a table fit for a gentleman of an estate far inferior to that he was in possession of, to sit down to himself, much less to ask any friend, who should casually come in to visit him, to partake of.

Nothing can be more galling to a woman of any spirit, than to see herself at the head of a family without sufficient means to support her character, as such, in a handsome manner: — the fair subject of this history had too much generosity, and indeed too much pride, in her composition, to endure that there should be any want in so necessary an article of life, and as often as she found occasion, would have recourse for a supply to her own little purse.

But this was a way of going on, which could not last long; — she complained of it to Mr. Munden; — but though the remonstrances she made him were couched in the most gentle terms that could be, he could not forbear testifying a good deal of displeasure on hearing them; — he told her, that he feared she was a bad economist, and that as she was a wife, she ought to understand, that it was one of the main duties of her place to be frugal of her husband's

husband's money ; and be content with such things as were suitable to his circumstances.

The surly look with which these words were accompanied, as well as the words themselves, made her easily perceive, that all the mighty passion he had pretended to have had for her, while in the days of courtship, was too weak to enable him to bear the least contradiction from her, now he became a husband.

She restrained, however, that resentment which so unexpected a discovery of his temper had inspired her with, from breaking into any violent expressions, and only mildly answered, that she should always be far from desiring any thing, which would be of real prejudice to his circumstances ; but added, that she was too well acquainted with his fortune, not to be well assured, it would admit of keeping a table much more agreeable to the rank he held in life, and the figure he made in other things.

‘ I am the best judge of that,’ replied he, a little disdainfully ; ‘ and also, that it is owing to your own want of management, that my table is so ill supplied ;— I would wish you therefore to contrive better

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‘ better for the future, as you may depend
‘ upon it, that unless my affairs take a
‘ better turn, I shall not be persuaded to
‘ make any addition to my domestic ex-
‘ pences.’

‘ I could wish then, sir,’ cried she, with
a little more warmth, ‘ that henceforth
‘ you would be your own purveyor; for
‘ I confess myself utterly unable to main-
‘ tain a family, like our’s, on the niggard
‘ stipend you have allotted for that
‘ purpose.’

‘ No really, madam,’ answered he, very
churlishly, ‘ I did not marry, in order to
‘ make myself acquainted with how the
‘ markets go, and become learned in the
‘ prices of beef and mutton;—I always
‘ looked on that as the province of a wife,
‘ —it is enough for me to discharge all
‘ reasonable demands on that score;—and
‘ since you provoke me to it, I must tell
‘ you, madam,’ continued he, that what
‘ my table wants of being compleat, is
‘ robbed from it by the idle superfluities
‘ you women are so fond of, and with
‘ which, I think, I ought to have no
‘ manner of concern.’

As she was not able to comprehend the
meaning of these words, she was extremely
astonished

astonished at them, and in a pretty hasty manner demanded a detail of those superfluities he accused her of; — on which, throwing himself back in his chair, and looking on her with the most careless and indifferent air he could assume, he replied in these terms :

‘ I know not,’ said he, ‘ what fool it was that first introduced the article of pin-money into marriage writings,—no-thing certainly is more idle, since a woman ought to have nothing apart from her husband ; but as it is grown into a custom, and I have condescended to comply with it, you should, I think, of your own accord, and without giving me the trouble of reminding you of it, convert some part of it, at least, to such uses as might ease me of a burden I have indeed no kind of reason to be loaded with ;—as for example,’ continued he, ‘ coffee, — tea, — chocolate, with all the appendages belonging to them, have no business to be enrolled in the list of house-keeping expences, and consequently not to be taken out of what I allow you for that purpose.’

Here he gave over speaking, but the consternation his wife was in preventing her from making any immediate answer, he resumed

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resumed his discourse : — ‘ since we are
‘ upon this topic, my dear,’ said he, ‘ it
‘ will be the best to tell you at once what
‘ I expect from you,—it is but one thing
‘ more; — which is this ; — you have a
‘ man entirely to yourself,---I am willing
‘ he should eat with the family;----but
‘ as to his livery and wages I think it
‘ highly reasonable you should be at the
‘ charge of.’

The innate rage, which, during the whole time he had been talking, swell’d her breast to almost bursting, would now no longer be confined.---‘ Good heavens!’ cried she, ‘ to what have I reduced myself?—Is this to be a wife?—Is this the state of wedlock?—call it rather an Egyptian bondage;—the cruel task-masters of the Israelites could exact no more.—Ungrateful man!’ pursued she, bursting into tears, ‘ is this the love,—the tenderness you vowed?’

Overwhelmed with passion, she was capable of uttering no more, but continued walking about the room in a disordered motion, and all the tokens of the most outrageous grief and anger : --- he sat silent for some time ; but at last looking somewhat more kindly on her than he had done, ‘ Prithce, my dear,’ said he,
‘ don’t

‘ don’t let me see you give way to emotions so unbecoming of yourself, and so unjust to me ; -- you shall have no occasion to complain of my want of love and tenderness, — you know what my expectations are, and when once I have gained my point, you may be sure, for my own sake, I shall do every thing suitable to it ; — I would only have you behave with a little prudence for the present.’

In concluding these words, he rose and took hold of her hand, but approached her with an air so cold and indifferent, as was far from atoning, with a woman of her penetration, for the unkindness of his late proposal. — ‘ No, Mr. Munden,’ cried she, haughtily turning from him, ‘ do not imagine I am so weak as to expect, after what you have said, any thing but ill usage.’

‘ I have said nothing that I have cause to repent of,’ answered he, ‘ and hope, that when this heat is over, you will do me the justice to think so too. — I leave you to consider of it, and bring yourself into a better humour against my return.’ — He added no more, but took his hat and sword, and went out of the room.

She

She attempted not to call him back, but retired to her chamber, in order to give a loose to passions more turbulent than she had ever known before.



CH A P. VI,

Contains a second matrimonial contest, of worse consequence than the former.

WHOEVER considers Miss Betsy Thoughtless in her maiden character, will not find it difficult to conceive what she now endured in that of Mrs. Munden. — All that lightened her poor heart, — all that made her patiently submit to the fate her brothers had, in a manner, forced upon her, was a belief of her being passionately beloved by the man she made her husband ; — but thus cruelly undeceived, by the treatment she had just met with from him, one may truly say, that if it did not make her utterly hate and despise him, it at least destroyed at once, in her, all the respect and good-will she had, from the first moment of her marriage, been endeavouring to feel for him.

It is hard to say whether her surprise at an eclairsissement she had so little expected,—her indignation at Mr. Munden's mean attempt to encroach upon her right,—or the shock of reflecting, that it was by death alone she could be relieved from the vexations which she was threatened with from a man of his humour, were most predominant in her soul; but certain it is, that all together racked her with most terrible revulsions.

She was in the midst of these agitations, when Lady Trusty came to visit her. — In the distractions of her thoughts she had forgot to give orders to be denied to all company, which otherwise she would doubtless, have done, even without excepting that dear and justly valued friend.

She endeavoured, as much as possible, to compose herself, and prevent all tokens of discontent from appearing in her countenance, but had not the power of doing it effectually enough, to deceive the penetration of that lady; — she immediately perceived that something extraordinary had happened to her, and as soon as she was seated began to enquire into the cause of the change she had observed in her.

Mrs.

Mrs. Munden, on considering what was most prudent in a wife, from the first moment of her becoming so, had absolutely resolved always to adhere, as strictly as possible, to this maxim of the poet :

- ‘ Secrets of Marriage should be sacred held,
- ‘ Their sweets and bitters by the wife conceal’d.’

But finding herself pretty strongly pressed by a lady, to whom she had the greatest and most just reason to believe she ought to have nothing in reserve, she hesitated not long to relate to her the whole story of the *brulée* she had with her husband.

Lady Trusty was extremely alarm’d at the account given her, and because she would be sure not to mistake any part of it, made Mrs. Munden repeat several times over every particular of this unhappy dispute ; — then, after a pause of some minutes, began to give her advice to her fair friend in the following terms :

‘ It grieves me to the soul,’ said that excellent lady, ‘ to find there is already

‘ any matter of complaint between you ;
‘ — you have been but two months married, and it is, methinks, by much too
‘ early for him to throw off the lover,
‘ and exert the husband ; — but since it
‘ is so, I would not have you, for your
‘ own sake, too much exert the wife : — I
‘ fear he is of a rugged nature, — it behoves you, therefore, rather to endeavour
‘ to soften it, by all the means in your
‘ power, than to pretend to combat with
‘ unequal force ; — you know the engagements you are under, and how little relief all the resistance you can make will
‘ be able to afford you.’

‘ Bless me, madam !’ cried Mrs. Munden, spirituously, ‘ would your ladyship
‘ have me give up, to the expence of
‘ house-keeping, that slender pittance allowed for cloaths and pocket-money in
‘ my marriage-articles ?’

‘ No, my dear,’ cried Lady Trusty,
‘ far be it from me to give you any such
‘ counsel ; — on the contrary, I am
‘ apprehensive, that if you should suffer
‘ yourself to be either menaced, or ca-
‘ joled, out of even the smallest part of
‘ your rights, ’tis possible that a man of
‘ Mr. Munden’s disposition, might here-
‘ after be tempted to encroach upon the
‘ whole,

‘ whole, and leave you nothing you could
‘ call your own.’

‘ It is very difficult, if not wholly im-
‘ possible.’ continued she, ‘ to judge with
‘ any certainty, how to proceed with a
‘ person, whose temper one does not
‘ know; — I am altogether a stranger to
‘ that of Mr. Munden, nor can you as yet
‘ pretend to be perfectly acquainted with
‘ it; — all I can say, therefore, is, that I
‘ would have you maintain your own pri-
‘ vileges, without appearing too tenacious
‘ of them.’

‘ I have then no other part to take,’
said Mrs. Munden, ‘ than just to lay out
‘ in the best manner I can what money
‘ he is pleased to allow, without making
‘ any addition, what accidents soever may
‘ happen to demand it.

‘ I mean so, replied Lady Trusty, ‘ and
‘ whenever there is any deficiency, as some
‘ there must necessarily be, in what might
‘ be expected from your way of living, I
‘ would not have you seem to take the
‘ least notice of it; — behave, as if en-
‘ tirely unconcerned, — contented, and
‘ easy; — leave it to him to complain,
‘ and when he does so, you will have an
‘ opportunity, by shewing the bills of
‘ what

‘ what you have laid out, of proving,
 ‘ that it is not owing to your want of
 ‘ good management, but to the scarcity
 ‘ of the means put into your hands, that
 ‘ his table is so ill supplied ; — but still
 ‘ let every thing you urge on this occa-
 ‘ sion, be accompanied with all the soft-
 ‘ nefs it is in your power to assume.’

To this Mrs. Munden, with a deep sigh made answer, that though she was an ill dissembler, and besides had little room, from her husband’s late carriage towards her, to flatter herself with any good effect of her submission, yet she would endeavour to follow her ladyship’s counsel, in making the experiment, however irksome it might be to her to do so.

They had a very long conversation together on this head, during the whole course of which Lady Trusty laboured all she could to persuade the other to look on her situation in a much less disagreeable light, than in reality it deserved.

But how little is it in the power of argument to reason away pain ! — one is much more deeply affected with what one feels than what one hears : — the heart of Mrs. Munden was beset with thorns, which all the words in the world would have

have been ineffectual to remove; — disappointed in every thing that could have rendered this marriage supportable to her; — her good-nature abused, — her spirit humbled and depressed, — no considerations were of force to moderate her passions, but that melancholy one that as her misfortunes were without a remedy, the best, and indeed the only relief that fate permitted was, in patiently submitting.

She acted, nevertheless, in every respect for several days, conformable to the method Lady Trusty had prescribed, and restrained her temper so, as neither by word or action to give Mr. Munden any just cause of offence; — he also kept himself within bounds, though it was easy for her to perceive, by his sullen deportment, every time he was at table, how ill he was satisfied with the provisions set before him.

A cold civility on the one side, and an enforced complaisance on the other, hindered the mutual discontent that reigned in both their hearts from being perceptible to any who came to visit them, and also from breaking into any indecencies between themselves, 'till one day a gentleman of some consideration in the world

happening, unexpectedly, to come to dine with them, Mr. Munden was extremely shocked at being no better prepared for his entertainment.

‘What! my dear,’ said he to his wife, ‘have you nothing else to give us?’—To which she replied, with a great deal of presence of mind,—‘I am quite ashamed and sorry for the accident; but you know, my dear, we both intended to dine abroad to-day, so I gave a bill of fare accordingly, and this gentleman came too late to make any addition to what I had ordered.’

It may be easily supposed the guest assured them, that there needed no apologies, that every thing was mighty well, and such like words of course; so no more was said upon this subject.

But the pride of Mr. Munden filled him with so much inward rage and spite, that he was scarce able to contain himself ’till his friend had taken leave, and he no sooner was at liberty to say what he thought proper, without incurring the censure of being unmannerly or unkind, than he began to reproach her in the most unjust and cruel terms, for having, as he said, exposed him to the contempt and

and ridicule of a person, who had hitherto held him in the highest estimation.

She made no other reply, than that she was no less confounded than himself, at what had happened, — that it was not in her power to prevent it, — that she could wish to be always prepared for the reception of any friend, and that she was certain, when she reflected on the cause, he would be far from laying any blame on her.

In speaking these words, she ran to her cabinet, and as Lady Trusty had directed, produced an account to what uses every single shilling she had received from him had been converted since the last dispute they had with each other on this score.

In presenting the papers to him, —
 ‘ Read these bills,’ said she, ‘ and be convinced how little I deserve such treatment from you: — you will find that there are no items inserted of coffee, tea, or chocolate, — Articles,’ — continued she, with an air a little disdainfully, —
 ‘ which you seemed to grumble at, ‘tho’ yourself and friends had the same share in, as well as me and mine.’

Rot your accounts,! cried he, tearing the papers she gave him into a thousand pieces, — ‘ have you the folly to imagine ‘ I will be troubled with such stuff? — ‘ It is sufficient I know upon the whole ‘ what ought to be done, and must plainly tell you, once for all, that you should ‘ rather think of retrenching your expences, than flatter yourself with expecting an increase of my allowance to you.’

‘ My expences! — my expences!’ reiterated she with vehemence, — ‘ what ‘ does the man mean?’ — My meaning,’ answered he, fullenly, ‘ would ‘ need no explanation, if you had either ‘ any love for me, or prudence enough ‘ to direct you to do what would entitle ‘ you mine; — but since you are so ‘ ignorant, I must tell you, that I think ‘ my family too much encumbered; — ‘ you have two maids, — I do not desire ‘ you to lessen the number, but they are ‘ certainly enough to wait upon you in a ‘ morning, — I have a man, for whom I ‘ never have any employment after that ‘ time, and he may wait at table, and ‘ attend you the whole afternoon; — I ‘ see therefore no occasion you have to ‘ keep a fellow merely to loiter about the ‘ house

‘ house, — eat, — drink, and run before
 ‘ your chair when you make your visits,
 ‘ — I insist, therefore, that you either
 ‘ discharge him, or consent to give him
 ‘ his livery and wages, and also to allow
 ‘ for his board out of your own annual
 ‘ revenue of pin-money.

What usage was this for a young lady, scarce yet three months married, — endued with every qualification to create love and esteem, — accustomed to receive nothing but testimonies of admiration from as many as beheld her, and addressed with the *extremest* homage and tenderness by the very man who now seemed to take pride in the power he had obtained of thwarting her humour, and dejecting that spirit and vivacity he had so lately pretended to adore.

How utterly impossible was it for her now to observe the rules laid down to her by Lady Trusty! — Could she, after this, submit to put in practice any softening arts she had been advised, to win her lordly tyrant into temper? — Could she, I say, have done this, without being guilty of a meanness, which all wives must have condemned her for?

But though the answers she gave to the proposal made her by this ungenerous husband were such as convinced him, she would never be prevailed upon to recede from any part of what was her due by contract, and though she testified her resentment, on his attempting such a thing, in terms haughty enough, yet did she confine herself within the limits of decency, not uttering a single word unbecoming of her character, either as the woman of good understanding, or the wife.

Mr. Munden's notions of marriage had always been extremely unfavourable to the ladies,—he considered a wife no more than an upper servant, bound to study and obey, in all things, the will of him to whom she had given her hand;—and how obsequious and submissive soever he appeared when a lover, had fixed his resolution, to render himself absolute master when he became a husband.

On finding himself thus disappointed in his aim he was almost ready to burst with an inward malice, which not daring to wreak, as perhaps at that time he could have wished, he vented in an action mean and pitiful indeed, but not to be wondered
at

at in a man possessed of so small a share of affection, justice, or good-nature.

The reader may remember, that Mr. Truworth, in the beginning of his courtship to Miss Betsy, had made her a present of a squirrel; — she had still retained this first token of love, and always cherished it with an uncommon care; — the little creature was sitting on the ridge of its cell cracking nuts, which his indulgent mistress had bestowed upon him: — the fondness she had always shewn of him put a sudden thought into Mr. Munden's head, he started from his chair, saying to his wife, with a revengeful sneer, — 'Here 'is one domestic, at least, that may be 'spared.' — With these words he flew to the poor harmless animal, seized it by the neck, and throwing it with his whole force against the carved work of the marble chimney, its tender frame was dashed to pieces.

All this was done in such an instant, that Mrs Munden had not time to make any attempt for preventing it, but on the sight of so disastrous a fate befalling her little favourite, and the brutality of him who inflicted it, raised emotions in her, which she neither endeavoured, nor at that instant could have power to quell.

'Monster!'

‘ Monster !’ — cried she ; — ‘ unworthy the name of man ; — you needed not have been guilty of this low piece of cruelty, to make me see to what a wretch I am sacrificed to.’ — Nor was there any occasion for exclamations such as these,’ replied he, scornfully, ‘ to make me know that I am married to a termagant.’

Many altercations of the like nature passed between them, to which Mrs. Munden was the first that put a period : — finding herself unable to restrain her tears, and unwilling he should be witness of that weakness in her, she flew out of the room, saying at the same time, that she would never eat, or sleep with him again.



CHAP. VII.

Gives an exact account of what happened in the family of Mr. Munden, after the lamentable and deplorable death of his lady's favourite squirrel, with several other particulars, much less significant, yet very necessary to be told.

IF Mr. Munden had set his whole invention to work, in order to find the means of rendering himself hateful in the eyes of his wife, he could not have done it more effectually, than by his savage treatment of her beloved squirrel;—many circumstances, indeed, concurred to set this action of his in the most odious light that could possibly be given it.

In the first place, the massacre of so unhurtful a little creature, who never did any thing to provoke its fate, had something in it strangely spleenatic and barbarous.

In the next, the bloody and inhuman deed being perpetrated by this injurious husband, merely in opposition to his wife, and because he knew it would give her
some

some sort of affliction, was sufficient to convince her, that he took pleasure in giving pain to her, and also made her not doubt but he would stop at nothing for that purpose, provided it were safe, and came within the letter of the law.

It grieved her to be deprived of a little animal she so long had kept,—with whose pretty tricks she had so often been diverted ; and it must be confessed, that to be deprived of so innocent a satisfaction, by the very man she had looked upon as bound by all manner of ties to do every thing to please her, was enough to give the most galling reflections to a woman of her delicacy and spirit.

But there was still another, and by many degrees a more aggravating motive for her indignation ; —if she had purchased this squirrel with her own money, or if it had been presented to her by any other hands than those of Mr. Trueworth, not only the loss would have been less shocking to her, but also the person, by whom she sustained that loss, would, perhaps, have found less difficulty in obtaining her forgiveness.

She kept her promise, however, and ordered a bed to be made ready for her in
another

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another room. — Mr. Munden came not home that night 'till very late; and being told what his wife had done, took not the least notice of it; but happening to meet her the next morning, as she was coming down stairs, 'So, madam, said he, I suppose you fancy this obstinate disobedience to your husband is mighty becoming in you.'

'When a husband, answered she, is ignorant of the regard he ought to have for his wife, or forgets to put it in practice, he can expect neither affection nor obedience, unless the woman he has married happens to be an idiot.'

They passed each other with these words, and she went directly to Lady Trusty, being impatient to acquaint her with the behaviour of her husband towards her since she last had seen her.

This worthy lady was astonished beyond measure at the recital; — it seemed so strange to her, that a gentlemen of Mr. Munden's birth, fortune, and education, should ever entertain the sordid design of obliging his wife, to convert to the family uses, what had been settled on her for her own private expences, that she could not have given credit to it from
any

any other mouth than that of the weeping sufferer: — his killing of the squirrel also, though a trifle in itself, she could not help thinking denoted a most cruel, revengeful, and mean mind.

But how much soever she condemned him in her heart, she forebore expressing the whole of her sentiments on this occasion to his wife, being willing, as they were joined to each other, by the most sacred and indissoluble bonds, rather to heal, if possible, the breach between them, than to add any thing which might serve to widen it.

She told her, that though she could not but confess, that Mr. Munden had behaved towards her, through this whole affair, in a manner very different from what he ought to have done, or what might have been expected from him, yet she was sorry to find, that she had carried things to that extremity, particularly she blamed her for having quitted his bed; — ‘ because, said she, it may furnish him with some matter of complaint against you, and likewise make others suspect you have not that affection for him, which is the duty of a wife.’

Mrs.

Mrs. Munden making no answer to this, and looking a little perplexed,—‘ I do not mean, by what I have said,’ resumed Lady Trusty, ‘ to persuade you to make any mean steps towards a reconciliation : — that is, I would not have you confess you have been in the wrong, or tell him you are sorry for what you have done : — that would be taking a blame upon yourself you do not deserve, and he would imagine he had a right to expect the same on every trifling occasion. — It may be, he might be imperious and ill-natured enough to create quarrels, merely for the sake of humbling your spirit and resentment into submissions.’

‘ But as to live in the manner you are likely to do together,’ continued she, ‘ cannot but be very displeasing in the eye of Heaven, and must also expose both of you to the censure and contempt of the world, when once it comes to be known and talked of, some means must be speedily found to bring about an accommodation between you.’

‘ O! madam,’ cried the other, hastily interrupting her, ‘ how impossible is it for me ever to look with any thing but
 ‘ disdain

‘ disdain and resentment, on a man, who
 ‘ after so many protestations of eternal
 ‘ love, eternal adoration, has dared to
 ‘ treat me in this manner ! — No,’ added
 she, with greater vehemence than before,
 ‘ I despise the low, — the groveling
 ‘ mind ; — light and darkness are not
 ‘ more opposites than we are, and can as
 ‘ easily agree.’

‘ You must not think, nor talk in this
 ‘ fashion,’ said the good lady : — ‘ all
 ‘ you can accuse him of will not amount
 ‘ to a separation : — besides, consider
 ‘ how odd a figure a woman makes, who
 ‘ lives apart from her husband : — there
 ‘ is an absolute necessity for a reconcilia-
 ‘ tion, and as it is probable, that neither
 ‘ of you will pursue any measures for that
 ‘ purpose, it is highly proper your friends
 ‘ should take upon them to interpose in
 ‘ the affair.’

It was a considerable time before Mrs. Munden could be persuaded, by all the arguments Lady Trufty made use of, that either her duty, her interest, or her reputation, required she should forgive the insults she had received, from this ungrateful and unworthy husband.

The

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The good lady would not, however, give over 'till she had prevailed on her not only to listen to her reasons, but also to be at last perfectly convinced by them : — this point being gained, the manner in which the matter should be conducted, was the next thing that employed her thoughts.

It seemed best to her, that the two Mr. Thoughtlesses should not be made acquainted with any part of what had passed, if the business she so much wished to see accomplished could be effected without their knowledge ; — her reason for it was this : — they were both men of pretty warm dispositions, especially the younger, and as they had been so assiduous in promoting this match, so early a breach, and the provocations given for it by Mr. Munden, might occasion them to shew their resentment for his behaviour in a fashion, which would make what was already very bad, much worse.

‘ Sir Ralph is a man in years,’ said she,
‘ — has been your guardian, and I am
‘ apt to believe, that on both these ac-
‘ counts his words will have some weight
‘ with Mr. Munden : — the friendship
‘ which he knows is between us, will
‘ also

‘also give me the privilege of adding
 ‘something in my turn; and I hope by
 ‘our joint mediation this quarrel may be
 ‘made up, so far at least as that you may
 ‘live civilly together.’

Mrs. Munden made no other reply to what her ladyship had said, than to thank her for the interest she took in her affairs, and the trouble she was about to give Sir Ralph on her account.

The truth is, this young lady would in her heart have been much better satisfied, that there had been a possibility of being separated for ever, from a person, who, she was now convinced, had neither love nor esteem for her, rather than to have consented to cohabit with him as a wife, even though he should be prevailed upon to request it, in the most seemingly submissive terms.

While they were in this conversation a message came from Mr. Edward Goodman, containing an invitation to Sir Ralph and Lady Trusty, to an entertainment that gentleman had ordered to be prepared the next day for several of his friends, on a particular occasion, which, because the reader as yet is wholly ignorant of, it is
 highly

highly proper he should be made acquainted with.



CHAP. VIII.

Presents the reader with some passages, which could not conveniently be told before, and without all doubt have been for a long time impatiently expected.

THE spirits of Lady Mellafin had for several months been kept up by the wicked agents she had employed in the management of the worst cause, that ever was taken in hand:—those subtle and, most infamous wretches, in order to draw fresh supplies of money from that unhappy woman, had still found means to elude and baffle all the endeavours of Mr. Goodman's honest lawyer, to bring the matter to a fair trial.

But at last all their diabolical inventions,—their evasions,—their subterfuges failing, and the day appointed, which they knew must infallibly bring the whole dark mystery of iniquity to light, when all their perjuries must be explored, and themselves exposed to the just punishment

ment of such flagitious crimes, not one of them had courage to stand the dreadful test, nor face that awful tribunal they had so greatly abused.

Yet so cruel were they, even to the very woman, all the remains of whose shattered fortune they had shared among them, as not to give her the least warning of her fate. — Nor 'till the morning, which she was made to hope would decide every thing in her favour, did she know she was undone, deserted, and left alone to bear the brunt of all the offended laws inflict on forgery.

What words can represent the horror, — the confusion of her guilty mind, when neither the person who drew up the pretended will, nor neither of those two who had set their names as witnesses appearing, she sent in search of them, and found they were all removed from their habitations, and fled, no one could inform her where.

Scarce had she time to make her escape out of the court, before word was given to an officer to take her into custody; — not daring to go home, nor knowing to whom she could have recourse for shelter in this exigence, she ran like one distracted
through

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through the streets, 'till she came to one of the gates of St. James's park, where meeting with a porter, she sent him to her lodgings, to order her daughter Flora, and Mrs. Prinks, to come that instant to her.

Mrs. Prinks immediately obeyed the summons, but Miss Flora had the audacity to desire to be excused, being then dressing to go on a business, which indeed she then imagined was of much more consequence to herself than any thing relating to her mother could possibly be.

After this dissolute and unfortunate creature was left by Mr. Trueworth, in the manner described in the third volume of this history, she gave a loose to agonies, which only those who have felt the same can be capable of conceiving.

Her shrieks, and the request Mr. Trueworth had made on his going out, brought up the woman of the house herself, to administer what relief was in her power, to a lady who seemed to stand in so much need of it.

Having prevailed on her to come down stairs, she seated her in a little room behind the bar, and as she saw the violence

of her passions threw her into frequent faintings, neglected nothing which she thought might be of service to recover her spirits, and compose her mind.

As she was thus charitably employed, a young gentleman, who used the house, and was very free with all belonging to it, happened to come in: — Miss Flora, besides being handsome, had something extremely agreeable and engaging in her air, and had her heart been possessed of half that innocence her countenance gave the promise of, her character would have been as amiable as it was now the contrary.

There are some eyes which shine thro' their tears, and are lovely in the midst of anguish; — those of Miss Flora had this advantage, and she appeared, in spite of her disorder, so perfectly charming to the stranger, that he could not quit the place without joining his endeavours to those of the good-natur'd hosts for her consolation, and had the satisfaction to find them much more effectual for that purpose.

The afflicted fair one finding herself somewhat better, thanked the good woman in the politest terms for the pains she had been at; but the gentleman would not

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not be denied seeing her safe home in a coach, saying the air on a sudden might have too violent an effect on her so lately recovered spirits, and that it was not fit she should be alone in case of accidents.

Miss Flora was easily prevailed upon to accept his obliging offer; — he attended her home, — ~~stayed~~ about half an hour with her, and entreated she would give him permission to come the next day, and enquire after her health.

She knew the world too well, and the disposition of mankind in general, not to see that there was something more than mere compassion in the civilities he had shewn to her : — she examined his person, — his behaviour, and found nothing in either that was not perfectly agreeable ; and though she had really loved Mr. Truworth to the greatest excess that woman could do, yet, as she knew he was irrecoverably lost, she looked upon a new attachment as the only sure means of putting the past out of her head.

A very few visits served to make an eclairsissement of the thoughts they mutually had entertained of each other, and as he had found by the woman of the tavern, that the distress of this young lady had

been occasioned by a love quarrel with a gentleman, who had brought her into that house, he began with expressing the utmost abhorrence of that injustice and ingratitude, which some were capable of, — ‘but,’ said he, ‘if some of us have ‘neither love nor honour for those that ‘love us, we all certainly love our own ‘happiness, and he must be stupid and ‘insensible, indeed,’ added he, embracing her with the warmest transport, ‘who ‘could not find it eternally within these ‘arms.’

‘You all talk so,’ answered she, with the most engaging smile she could put on; ‘but as my youth, — innocence, — and ‘perhaps a little mixture of female vanity, have once misled me, it behoves , me to be extremely cautious how the ‘tender impulse gets a second time possession of my heart.’

In short, she put him not to a too great expence of vows and protestations before she either was, or pretended to be convinced of the sincerity of his passion, and also rewarded it in as ample a manner as his soul could wish.

It is certain, that for a time this new gallant behaved with the extreme fondness
towards

towards her, — did every thing the most ardent lover could do to please her, — he treated her, — carried her to all public places of entertainment, and what in her present circumstances was most necessary to her, was continually making her very rich and valuable presents.

But it could not be expected, that an amour entered into in this manner, and which had no solid esteem on either side for its foundation, would be of any long continuance ; — the gentleman had a great deal of good-nature, but was gay and inconstant, as the most variable of his sex ; — he found a new charm in every new face that presented itself to him, — and as he wanted no requisites to please the fair, he too seldom failed in his attempts upon them.

Miss Flora was not ignorant, that he had many amusements of this kind, even while he kept up the most tender correspondence with her ; but perceiving, that reproaches and complaints were equally in vain with a man of his humour, she had the cunning to forbear persecuting him with either, and by appearing always easy, dégagée, and unconcerned, preserved her acquaintance with him, and re-

ceived proofs of his liberality long after she had lost those of his inclination.

On being told, that he was going on a party of pleasure into the south of France, she exercised all her wit and artifice to engage him to permit her to be one of the company ; but he treated this request as a mere bagatelle, — said the thing was utterly impracticable, — that none of the gentlemen took any ladies with them, — so he would not have her think of it.

It was in order to take her leave of him, before his departure, that she was going to his lodgings when Lady Mellasin had sent for her into the park.

The cool reception he had given her, sent her home in a very ill humour, which was greatly heightened by a letter, which she found Mrs. Prinks had left for her on the table.

That woman having joined her lady in the park, and consulted together what was to be done, they took a hackney coach, and drove to an obscure part of the town, where they hired lodgings in a feigned name, after which Mrs. Prinks hurried home, — packed up what cloaths, and other necessaries she thought would be immediately

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immediately wanted, and after having wrote a short account to Miss Flora of the misfortune that had happened, and given her directions where to come, returned with all haste to her disconsolate lady.



CHAP. IX.

Contains the catastrophe of Lady Mellasin's and her daughter Flora's adventures, while on this side the globe.

WHILE this unhappy little family were in their concealment, each of them set their whole wits to work to find some means, by which Lady Mellasin might be extricated from that terrible dilemma she had brought herself into.

But as this was a thing in its very nature, as affairs had been managed, morally impossible to be accomplished, all their endeavours for that purpose only served to shew them the extreme vanity of the attempt, and consequently to render them more miserable.

Despair at length, and the near prospect of approaching want, so humbled the once haughty spirit of Lady Mellasin, that she

resolved on writing to Mr. Edward Goodman, — to make use of all her rhetoric to sooth him into forgiveness for the troubles she had occasioned him, and in fine to petition relief from the very man, whom she had made use of the most villainous arts to prejudice.

The contents of her letter to that much injured gentleman were as follows :

TO EDWARD GOODMAN, Esq;

‘ S I R,

‘ APPEARANCES are so much against me, that I scarce dare say I am innocent, though I know myself so, as to any intention of doing you injustice :—I cannot, however, forbear giving you a short sketch of the imposition which has been practised upon me, and in my name attempted to be put on you.

‘ The will, which has occasioned this long contest between us, was brought me by a person, who told me, he had drawn it up exactly according to my late husband’s instructions, the very evening before he died ; — the subscribing witnesses gave me the same assurance, and also added, that Mr. Goodman was so well convinced of my integrity,

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‘grity, and the wrong he had done me
‘by suspecting it, that had he lived only
‘to the next morning, he had resolved to
‘send for me home, and be reconciled to
‘me in the face of the world ; — so that
‘if the thing was a piece of forgery, these
‘men are only guilty, — I am entirely free
‘from any share in it.

‘But as these proceedings, which I
‘have unhappily been prevailed upon to
‘countenance, have given you a great deal
‘of trouble and expence, I sincerely ask
‘your pardon for it : — this is all the at-
‘tonement I can make to Heaven for of-
‘fences more immediately my own.

‘I am very sensible, notwithstanding,
‘that by what I have done, I have not only
‘forfeited my claim to such part of the
‘effects of Mr. Goodman as appertain to
‘the widow of an eminent and wealthy
‘citizen, but likewise all my pretensions
‘to the friendship and favour of the per-
‘son he has made his heir ; — yet, sir,
‘however guilty I may seem to you, or
‘how great my faults in reality may have
‘been, I cannot help being of opinion,
‘that when you remember I was once
‘the wife of an uncle, whose memory
‘you have so much cause to value, you
‘will think the name and character I have

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‘ borne ought to defend me from public
‘ infamy, parish alms, and beggary.

‘ Reduced as I am, it would ill become
‘ me to make any stipulations, or lay a
‘ tax on the goodness I am necessitated to
‘ implore. — No, sir ; as I can now de-
‘ mand nothing, so also I can hope for
‘ nothing, but from your compassion and
‘ generosity ; and to these two amiable
‘ qualities alone shall ascribe whatever pro-
‘ vision you shall think fit to make for me,
‘ out of that abundance I was once in full
‘ possession of.

‘ I shall add no more, than to intreat
‘ you will consider, with some portion of
‘ attention and good-nature, on what I
‘ have lately been, and what I at present
‘ am,

‘ The most unfortunate,

‘ And most forlorn of womankind

M. MELLASIN GOODMAN.

‘ P.S. My daughter Flora, the innocent
‘ partner of my griefs and sufferings,
‘ will have the honour to deliver this
‘ to you, and I hope return with a
‘ favourable answer.’

Lady

Lady Mellafin chose to send Miss Flora with this letter, as believing her agreeable person and manner of behaviour would have a greater effect on that youthful heart of the person it was addressed to, than could have been expected from the formal and affected gravity of Mrs. Prinks.

It is not unlikely too, but that she might flatter herself with the hopes of greater advantages, by her daughter's going in person to Mr. Goodman's, than those, which her letter had petitioned for: — she had often heard, and read, of men, whose resentment had been softened and melted into tenderness, on the appearance of a lovely object: — as the poet somewhere or other expresses it :

- Beauty, like ice, our footing does betray,
- Who can tread sure on the smooth slipp'ry way.

Miss Flora herself was also very far from being displeased at going on this errand, and as it was not proper for her to dress in the manner she would have done, on making a visit to any other person, it cost her some time before her setting out, to equip herself in such a deshabille, as

she thought would be most genteel and become her best.

She had the good fortune to find Mr. Goodman at home, and was immediately introduced to him; — he was a little surprized at a visit made him by a young lady, whom he had never seen before, but not enough to prevent him from receiving her with the utmost complaisance: — he saluted her, — seated her in a chair, and then asked, what commands she had to favour him with: — on which taking out the letter, and giving it to him:— ‘ This, sir,’ said she, with a deep sigh, ‘ will inform you of the request that brings me here.

Mr. Goodman read it hastily over; but while he was doing so, could not forbear shaking his head several times, yet spoke nothing, ’till after a pause of some minutes. ‘ Madam,’ said he, ‘ as this is a business, which I could not expect to have heard of, I must confess myself altogether unprepared how to proceed in it. If Lady Mellasin,’ added he, ‘ will give herself the trouble to send in three or four days, she may depend on an answer from me.’

The

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The coldness of these words, and the distant air he assumed while speaking them, so widely different from that with which he had accosted this lady on her first entrance, made her presently see, she had nothing to hope from this embassy, on her own account, and made her also tremble for that of her mother.

As he urged her not to stay, nor even gave the least hint, that he was desirous of her doing so, she rose, and with a most dejected air took her leave, telling him, in going out, that she should not fail of acquainting Lady Mellasin with his commands, who, she doubted not, would be punctual in obeying them.

Mr. Goodman was, indeed, too well acquainted with the character of Miss Flora to be capable of receiving any impression from the charms nature had bestowed upon her, even though they had been a thousand times more brilliant, than in effect they were, and she had not been the daughter of a woman, who had rendered herself so justly hateful to him.

Lady Mellasin was shocked to the very soul, at being told the reception her daughter had met with, and could not help

the lawyer, and the two Mr. Thoughtlesses, that it was his late uncle's intention, that she should not be left without a decent provision, and being willing to conform, as much as possible, to all the desires of a person, whom he had always esteemed as a parent, he passed by the injury which since his death she had attempted to do to himself, and within the time he had mention'd to Miss Flora, wrote an answer to the request, in the following terms:

To Lady MELLASIN GOODMAN.

‘ MADAM,

‘ THOUGH you cannot but be sensible, that your late base attempt to invalidate my dear uncle's will, excludes you from receiving any benefit from it, yet as I am determin'd, as far as in my power, to make the example of that excellent man the rule of all my actions, I shall not carry my resentment, for the injustice you have done me, beyond what he express'd for those much greater injuries he sustained, by your infidelity and ingratitude: — it was not his intention you should starve, nor is it my desire you should do so.

‘ I am willing, madam, to allow you a pension of one hundred pounds per ann

‘ to

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‘ to be quarterly paid into whose hands
‘ soever you shall think fit to appoint for
‘ that purpose, — but it must be on con-
‘ dition, that you retire forthwith, and
‘ pass the whole remainder of your days
‘ in some remote part of the kingdom :
‘ —the farther you remove from a town,
‘ where your ill conduct has rendered you
‘ so obnoxious, the better.’

‘ This, madam, is what I insist upon,
‘ and is indeed no more than what your
‘ own safety demands from you : — a
‘ very strict search is making after your
‘ accomplices, and if they, or any of
‘ them, shall happen to be found, it will
‘ be in vain for you to flatter yourself
‘ with escaping that punishment, which
‘ the offended laws inflict on crimes of
‘ this nature ; — nor would it be in my
‘ power to shield you from that fate,
‘ which even the meanest and most ab-
‘ ject of those concerned with you, must
‘ suffer.

‘ As I should be extremely sorry to see
‘ this, I beg you, for your own sake, to be
‘ speedy in your resolution, which, as soon
‘ as you inform me of, I shall act accord-
‘ ingly.—I am,

‘ Yours, &c.

‘ E. GOODMAN.’

This he ordered to be delivered to any one, who should say they came from Lady Mellafin, and Mrs. Prinks accordingly received it.

Lady Mellafin, in the miserable circumstances to which she had reduced herself, was transported to find she should not be entirely left without support : — as for her being obliged to quit London, she was not in the least shocked at it, as there was no possibility for her even to appear publickly in it, and she was rather desirous than averse to be out of a place, which could no longer afford her those pleasures and amusements, she had once so much indulged herself in the enjoyment of.

But when she considered on her banishment, and ran over in her mind, what part of England she should make choice of for her asylum, the whole kingdom appeared a desert to her, when driven from the gaities of the court and capital ; — she therefore resolved to go farther, and enter into a new scene of life, which might be more likely to obliterate the memory of the former ; — she had heard much talk of Jamaica, — that it was a rich and opulent place, — that the inhabitants thought of little else, but how
to

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to divert themselves in the best manner the country afforded ; and that they were not too strict in their notions, either as to honour or religion ; — that reputation was a thing little regarded among them ; — so that in case the occasion that had brought her thither should happen to be discovered, she would not find herself in the less estimation.

She therefore hesitated not to write a second letter to Mr. Goodman, acquainting him with her desire of going to that plantation, and hinting to him, that, if it would be giving him too great a trouble to remit the quarterly payments he mentioned, she should take it as a particular favour if he would be pleased to bestow on her such a sum as he should think proper, in lieu of the annuity he had offered.

Mr. Goodman was extremely pleased with this proposal, and several letters having passed between them concerning the conditions, he agreed to give her two hundred pounds in specie, to provide herself with sufficient necessaries for the voyage, and eight hundred more to be deposited in the hands of the captain of the ship, to be paid on her arrival, with which she appeared very well satisfied, and

and gave him the most solemn assurances never to trouble him again.

But Miss Flora was all distraction at this event ;—the thoughts of leaving dear London were equally irksome to her with those of death itself : — fain would she have staid behind ; but what could she do ? — without reputation, — without friends, — without money, — there was no remedy but to share her mother's fortune ; — Mrs. Prinks also, who, by living so long with Lady Mellasin, known to be in all her secrets, and agent in her iniquitous proceedings, could have no character to recommend her to any other service, continued with the only person she indeed was fit to live with ; and they all embarked together on board a ship that was then ready to sail.

All Mr. Goodman's friends congratulated him on the service he had done his country, in ridding it of three persons, who, by perverting the talents heaven had bestowed upon them to the most vile purpose, were capable of doing the greatest mischiefs to the more innocent and unwary. It was on this occasion, that he made the invitation before-mentioned.



C H A P. X.

Returns to the affairs of Mrs. Munden:

THERE were present at the entertainment made by Mr. Goodman, several other of his friends, besides Sir Ralph and Lady Trusty; — the two Mr. Thoughtlesses, and Mr. Munden: — the husband of that lady had also received an invitation to be one of the guests, but he pretended a previous engagement would not permit him to accept the favour intended him.

He made his excuse, however, in terms so polite, and seemingly sincere, that none of the company, excepting those who were in the secret of the disagreement between him and his wife, had any apprehensions that his absence was occasioned by any other motive than what his message had expressed.

Sir Ralph Trusty and his Lady, who were the only persons who had the least suspicion of the truth of this affair, could not help being a good deal concerned at it, but they forbore taking any notice
till

'till the latter perceiving Mrs. Munden had retired to a window at the further end of the room, in order to give herself a little air, stepped hastily towards her, and in a low voice accosted her in these terms :

' I see plainly, my dear,' said she, ' through the excuse your husband has made for not complying with Mr. Goodman's invitation, and am heartily sorry to find this fresh proof of the disunion between you ; — it is high time something should be attempted to put things on a better footing. — I will desire Sir Ralph to send for Mr. Munden to-morrow, and we will try what can be done.'

' Your ladyship is extremely good,' replied the other, ' and I shall be always ready to submit to whatever you shall think proper for me ; — but I am determined to be entirely passive in this affair, and shall continue to live with Mr. Munden in the same manner I do at present, 'till a very great alteration in his behaviour shall oblige me to think I ought in gratitude to make some change in mine.'

Lady Trusty would not prolong the conversation for fear of being observed,
and

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and they both rejoined the company: — After this there passed nothing of sufficient moment to acquaint the reader with, so that I shall only say, that after a day, and great part of the ensuing night spent in feasting, merriment, and all that could exhilarate the spirits, and excite good humour, every one retired to their respective dwellings, highly satisfied with the manner in which they had been entertained by the young merchant.

Lady Trusty was far from being forgetful of the promise she had made to her fair friend; and after a serious consultation with Sir Ralph, in what manner it was most proper to proceed, prevailed upon that gentleman, who was little less zealous than herself in doing good offices, to write the following billet to Mr. Munden:

TO GEORGE MUNDEN, Esq;

S I R,

A BUSINESS, which I am perfectly well assured is of the utmost consequence both to your present and future happiness, obliges me to entreat the favour of seeing you this morning at my house; it not being so proper, for reasons I shall

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‘ shall hereafter inform you of, for me to
‘ wait on you at your’s.

‘ As I have no other interest in what I
‘ have to impart, than merely the plea-
‘ sure I shall take in doing you a service,
‘ and discharging what I think the duty
‘ of every honest man, I flatter myself
‘ you will not fail of complying imme-
‘ diately with my request, and at the same
‘ time believe me to be, what I am,

‘ With the greatest sincerity,

‘ S I R,

‘ Your well-wisher,

‘ And most humble

‘ And most obedient servant,

‘ RALPH TRUSTY.’

This letter being sent pretty early in the morning, Mr. Munden was but just out of bed when he received it :—a breakfast much less pleasing to him than his chocolate ;— he doubted not but his wife had made Lady Trusty acquainted with the whole secret of his family affairs, and therefore easily guessed on what score he was sent for in this pressing manner by Sir Ralph ; and as it was highly disagreeable
to

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to him to enter into any discussions on that head, it was some time before he could resolve within himself what answer he should send.

But whatever deficiencies there might be in this gentleman, none, excepting those of his own family, to whom he did not think it worth his while to be complaisant, could never accuse him of want of politeness. — A character so dear to him, that, perhaps, he would not have forfeited it, even for the attainment of any other of the more shining and valuable virtues of his sex.

Perplexing, therefore, as he knew this interview must necessarily be to him, he could not think of behaving in an uncourtly manner to a gentleman of Sir Ralph Trusty's rank and fortune; and having ordered that the servant, who brought the letter should come up, desired him, in the most affable terms, to acquaint his master that nothing should deprive him of the honour of attending him the moment he was dressed.

Sir Ralph Trusty in his younger years had lived very much in London,—had kept the best company in it, and though he was perfectly sincere in his nature, and

had a thorough contempt for all those idle superstitious ceremonies, which some people look upon as the height of good breeding, and value themselves so much upon, yet he knew how to put them in practice whenever he found they would facilitate any point he had to gain; and as Mr. Munden was altogether the courtier in his behaviour, he thought it best to address him in his own way, and receive him rather in a manner as if he was about to praise him for some laudable action he had done, than make any remonstrances to him, on a conduct, which he wanted to convince him required some amendment.

After having said a great many obliging things to him, in order to bring him into a humour proper for his purpose, the politic old baronet began in these terms to open the business, on which he had desired to speak with him.

‘ I have not words to make you sensible,’ continued he, ‘ how much your absence was regretted yesterday by all the company at Mr. Goodman’s, especially by the two Mr. Thoughtlesses, who, indeed, on all occasions, express the highest esteem and regard for you, both as a friend and brother; but I was
 ‘ more

‘more particularly affected, when, on
‘coming home, my wife acquainted me
‘with what she imagined the real cause
‘that deprived us of you.

‘She told me,’ added he, ‘that having
‘the other day surprised Mrs. Munden in
‘tears and great confusion, she would not
‘leave her till she wrested from her a se-
‘cret, which I am equally ashamed and
‘sorry to repeat, but which you can be at
‘no loss to guess at.’

Though Mr. Munden had foreseen on
what account he was sent for, and had
prepared himself for it, yet he could not
forbear testifying some confusion ; but re-
covering himself from it, as soon as he
could, — ‘Yes, Sir Ralph, I easily per-
‘ceive,’ answered he, ‘that my wife has
‘been making some complaints against
‘me to your lady, which doubtless have
‘laid me under her displeasure, as I know
‘the accuser has the advantage of the ac-
‘cused, in the opinion of those to whom
‘they appeal.’

‘Not at all,’ cried Sir Ralph, hastily,
‘I dare answer that my wife is no less
‘concerned for your sake, than for that
‘of Mrs. Munden, at the unfortunate dis-
F. 2 agreement

‘ agreement that has happened between
‘ you.’

As he was speaking these words, lady Trusty, either by design or accident, passed by the door of the room where they were sitting. — ‘ Come in, my dear,’ said Sir Ralph to her, ‘ and justify yourself from
‘ being swayed against right reason, by
‘ any partial affection to your fair friend.’

‘ If you mean in the case of Mrs. Munden, as I suppose you do,’ replied she,
‘ I can acquit myself with very great ease
‘ from any imputation on that score, and
‘ am ready, even before her husband, to
‘ give it as my judgment, that in all disputes between persons, who are married
‘ to each other, especially when carried
‘ to any height, neither of them are wholly
‘ faultless; for, though one may be the
‘ first aggressor, the other seldom, if ever,
‘ behaves so as not to incur some part of
‘ the blame.’

‘ Your ladyship is all goodness,’ said Mr. Munden, very respectfully, ‘ and in
‘ what you have said, discover not only
‘ a penetration, but also a love of justice
‘ which can never be too much admired
‘ and applauded. — What your ladyship
‘ has observed between me and Mrs. Munden,
‘ den,

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den, is exactly the thing;—it is certain,
that both of us have been to blame :
— I have, perhaps, acted in a manner
somewhat too abruptly towards her, and
she in one too resentful, and too int-
perious towards me; and though I am
willing to allow my dear Betsy all the
merit of those good qualities she is pos-
sessed of, yet, I cannot help giving her
some part of the character Mr. Congreve
ascribes to Zara in his Mourning Bride,
and saying,

“ That she has passion, which outstrips the
winds,

“ And roots her reason up,”

Lady Trusty, who, for the sake of Mrs.
Munden's reputation, was so eager to
patch up a reconciliation at any rate be-
tween her and her husband, would not
seem to defend her behaviour as a wife,
while she gently accused him of having
too far exerted the authority of a husband.

In a word, both Sir Ralph, and his
lady, managed in so artful a manner, still
blending cajolings with remonstrances,
that when they came to enter into a dis-
cussion on this affair, that Mr. Munden,
whatever he thought in his heart, could

not forbear seeming to yield to the justice of their reasonings.

He consented, though not without some scruples, and a much greater share of inward reluctance, that his complaisance would permit him to make shew of, to add one guinea per week to his allowance for the expences of his table. — As to the rest, he readily enough agreed to meet his wife half way towards a reconciliation, — assured them, that he was far from requiring any other submission on her part, than what he would set her the example of in himself, and that he wished nothing more than to exchange forgiveness with her.

On this, lady Trusty dispatched a servant directly to Mrs. Munden, to let her know she must needs speak with her, immediately; — which summons was no sooner delivered, than complied with.

This prudent lady having cast about in her mind all that was proper to be done, in order to accomplish the good work she laboured for, and had so much at heart, would not leave it in the power of chance to disappoint what she had so happily begun, and having prevailed over the ill-nature and sourness of the husband, thought it equally necessary to prevent the
resentment,

resentment, or inadvertency of the wife, from frustrating her endeavours,

On being told Mrs. Munden was come, she ran down stairs to receive her, — led her into a parlour, and informed her, as briefly as she could, all that part, which she thought would be most satisfactory to her, of the conversation which had passed between them and Mr. Munden, on her score.

Finding what she said was received by the other more coolly than she wished, she took that privilege, which her rank, her age, and the friendship she had always shewn to her, might justly claim, to remonstrate to her, that it did not become her situation and character to stand too much upon punctilio's at this time; — which all, that either was, or ought to be dear to womankind, depended on a speedy accommodation with her husband; — ‘The unhappy brulee,’ said she, ‘has lasted too long, — your servants must certainly know it, — you cannot be assured of their secrecy, — the whole affair, perhaps, with large additions to it, will soon become the talk of the town, — every one will be descanting upon it, and how much soever Mr. Munden may

'be in fault, you cannot hope to escape
'your share in the censure.'

Poor Mrs. Munden, who looked upon this lady as a second mother, would not attempt to offer any thing in opposition to the arguments she used; and, besides, could not forbear avowing, within herself, the justice of them. — 'Well, Madam,' answered she, with a deep sigh, 'I shall endeavour to follow your ladyship's advice, — and, since I am a wife, will do my best to make the yoke, I have submitted to, sit as lightly upon me as possible.'

Lady Trusty perceiving her spirits were very much depressed, omitted nothing, that the shortness of time would allow, to persuade her to believe, that her condition was not so unhappy, in reality, as she at present imagined it to be; and having brought her to somewhat of more cheerful temper, conducted her into the room where Sir Ralph and Mr. Munden were still discoursing on the matter in question.

'Welcome, my fair charge,' cried the former, taking her by the hand, and drawing her towards Mr. Munden, — 'I have once already had the honour of giving you to this gentleman, permit me to
'do

‘do so a second time ;— I hope, with the
‘same satisfaction on both sides, as at
‘first.’

‘On mine, by heaven it is,’ replied
Mr. Munden, flying hastily to embrace
her, as she moved slowly forward ; — ‘if
‘my dearest Betsy will promise to forget
‘what is past, the pains I have suffered,
‘during this interruption of my happi-
‘ness, will be a sufficient security for
‘her, that I shall be very careful for the
‘future, to avoid doing any thing that
‘may again subject me to the like mis-
‘fortune.’

These words, and the tender air which
he assumed in speaking them, were so
much beyond what Mrs. Munden could
have expected from him, after his late
treatment of her, that all her pride, her
anger, and even her indifference, subsided
at that instant, and gave place to senti-
ments of the most gentle nature.

‘You must believe,’ answered she,
with an infinity of sweetness in her voice
and eyes, ‘that I have also had my share
‘of anguish ; but whatever inquietudes
‘you have sustained on my account must
‘be forgotten on your part, as it shall
‘be mine to make atonement for them,

‘ by every thing in my power, which can
‘ flatter me with the hopes of doing so.’

Insensible and morose as Mr. Munden was, he could not avoid, on this obliging behaviour in his fair wife, being touched in reality with some soft emotions, which he so well knew how to magnify the appearance of, that not only herself, but the by-standers, imagined he was the most transported man alive.

Impossible it is to express how much Sir Ralph, and his good lady, rejoiced to see this happy event, — they entertained them very elegantly at dinner, — in the afternoon they went all together to take the air in Kensington gardens, — and a great deal of company coming in the evening to visit lady Trusty, every thing contributed to keep up the spirit and good-humour of the newly re-united pair.



CHAP. XI.

Contains some few particulars which followed the reconciliation.

THOUGH this reconciliation was not altogether sincere on the side of Mr. Munden, yet being made in the presence of Sir Ralph and lady Trufty, it kept him from giving any flagrant demonstrations at present, that it was not so, and he continued to live with his amiable wife in the most seeming good harmony for some time.

She, on her part, performed with the utmost exactitude all she had promised to him, and though she could not be said to feel for him all that warmth of affection, which renders the discharge of our duty so great a pleasure to ourselves, yet her good nature and good sense well supplied that deficiency, and left him no room to accuse her of the least failure in what might be expected from the best of wives.

During this interval of tranquillity, she lost the society of two persons, the tenderness of whose friendship for her she had

experienced in a thousand instances ; — Mr. Francis Thoughtless, who had stayed so long in town, merely through the indulgence of his commanding officer, was now obliged to repair to his regiment then quartered at Leeds in Yorkshire, and Sir Ralph Trusty having finished his affairs in town, his lady returned with him to their country seat.

Thus was she almost at once deprived of the only two persons, to whom she could impart her mind without reserve, or on whose advice she could depend in any exigence whatever ; for as to her elder brother, he was too eager in the pursuit of his pleasures, and too much absorbed in them, to be truly sollicitous for any thing that did not immediately relate to them ; — she saw him but seldom, and when she did so, there was a certain distance in his behaviour towards her, which would not permit her to talk to him with that freedom she could have wished to do.

She had not, however, any fresh motive to regret their departure on this account ; — Mr. Munden continued to behave to her in much the same manner as he had done since the breach had been made up between them ; — he was, indeed, very much abroad, but as she was far

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far from being passionately fond of him, and only desired he would treat her civilly when with her, the little she enjoyed of his company was no manner of affliction to her.

She still retained some part of that gaiety and love of a variety of conversation, which had always been a predominant propensity in her nature, and though in all her excursions, and the liberties she took, she carefully avoided every thing that might taint her virtue; or even cast a blemish on her reputation, yet were they such, as a husband, who had loved with more ardency, would not, perhaps have been very easy under: — on his part also, the late hours he came home at, — the messages and letters, which were daily brought to him by porters, might have given much disquiet to a wife, not defended from jealousy by so great a share of indifference; — but in this they perfectly agreed, — neither offered to interfere with the amusements of the other, nor even pretended to enquire into the nature of them.

Though this was a mode of living together, which was far from being capable of producing that happiness, for which the state of marriage was ordained; yet was

ix

it perfectly easy to persons who had so little real affection for each other, and however blameable in the eyes of the truly discreet, escaped the censure of the generality of mankind, by its being so frequently practised.

But I shall not expatiate on their present manner of behaviour to each other, since it was not of any long continuance, but proceed to the recital of a little adventure, which, though it may seem trifling to the reader in the repetition, will hereafter be found of some consequence.

It was a mighty custom with Lady Mel-lasin and Miss. Flora, when they had nothing of more consequence to entertain them, to go among the shops, and amuse themselves with enquiring after new fashions, and looking over that variety of merchandize, which is daily brought to this great mart of vanity and luxury.

Mrs. Munden, while in a virgin state, and a boarder at Mr. Goodman's, used frequently to accompany those ladies, when bent on such sort of rambles, and she still was fond enough of satisfying her curiosity this way, at such times as she found nothing else to do, or was not in a humour to give, or receive visits.

Happen-

MISS BETSY THOUGHTLESS. 113.

Happening one day to pass by the well-furnished shop of an eminent mercer, and seeing several silks lie spread upon the counter, she was tempted to step in, and examine them more nearly. A great number of others were also taken from the shelves, and laid before her; but she not seeming to approve any of them, the mercer told her he had some curious pieces out of the loom that morning of a quite new pattern, which he had sent his man with to a lady of quality, and expected he would be back in a few minutes, so intreated she would be pleased either to stay a little, or give him directions where she might be waited upon.

Mrs. Munden complied with the former of these requests, and the rather because, while they were talking, she heard from a parlour behind the shop a harpsichord very finely touched, accompanied with a female voice, which sung in the most harmonious accents, part of this air, composed by the celebrated signior Bononcini :

“ M’ insegna l’amor l’inganno,
“ Mi togl’al cor, l’affanno,
“ Mi da l’ardir amor,
“ Mi da l’ardir amor”

The

The attention Mrs. Munden gave to the musick, preventing her from speaking, the mercer said he was sorry she was obliged to wait so long ; — “ I rather ought to thank you, sir, for detaining me, since I have an entertainment more elegant than I could have expected elsewhere.”

“ The lady sings and plays well indeed, madam,” said he ; “ she is a customer of mine, and sometimes does my wife the favour of passing an hour with her.”

The lady still continued playing, and Mrs. Munden expressing a more than ordinary pleasure in hearing her, the complaisant mercer asked her to walk into the parlour ; to which she replied, she would gladly accept his offer, provided it would be no intrusion ; he assured her it would not be accounted so in the least, and with these words conducted her into the room.

A few words served to introduce her to his wife, who being a very genteel, pretty sort of woman, received her with great civility ; but the fair musician was no sooner told the effects her accents had produced on Mrs. Munden, than, tho’ she was
a fo-

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a foreigner, and spoke very broken English, she returned the compliment made her by that lady on the occasion, in a manner so perfectly free, and withal so noble, as discovered her to have been bred among, and accustomed to converse with persons in the highest stations in life.

Vain as Mrs. Munden was of her perfections, she was always ready to acknowledge and admire those she found in others of her sex. There was something in this lady that attracted her in a peculiar manner; she took as much delight in hearing her talk, as she had done in hearing her sing; she longed to be of the number of her acquaintance, and made her several overtures that way, which the other either did not, or would not seem to understand.

The mercer's man returning with the silks his master had mentioned, Mrs. Munden thought, after the obliging entertainment she had received, she could do no less than become a purchaser of something; accordingly she bought a piece of silk for a night-gown, though at that time she had not the least occasion for it, nor on her coming into the shop had any intention to increase her wardrobe.

Having

THE HISTORY OF

Having now no longer a pretence to stay, she gave the mercer directions where to send home the silk, and then took her leave; but could not do it without telling the lady, that she should think herself extremely happy in having the opportunity of a much longer conversation with her.

On her speaking in this manner, the other appeared in very great confusion, but having, after a pretty long pause, a little recovered herself, "It is an honour, madam," said he, "I would be extremely ambitious of, and had certainly taken the liberty to request it of you, if there were not a cruel peculiarity in my fate, which deprives me of all hopes of that, and many other blessings, I could wish to enjoy."

Mrs. Munden was so much surprized at these words, that she could only reply, she was sorry a lady, who appeared so deserving, should be denied any thing she thought worthy of desiring.

It might well indeed seem a little strange that a lady so young, beautiful, and accomplished, should have any motive to induce her to speak in the terms she had done.

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done. Mrs. Munden had a good deal of curiosity in her composition, she thought there was something ex.raordinarily mysterious in the circumstances of this stranger, and was very desirous of penetrating into the secret.

About an hour after she came home, the mercer's man brought home the silk: she enquired of him the name, condition, and place of abode of the young lady she had seen at his master's, but received not the least information from him to any of the questions she had put to him. He told her, that though she often bought things at their shop, yet his master always carried them home himself, and he was entirely ignorant of every thing relating to her.

This a little vexed her, because she doubted not but that if she once found out her name, quality, and where she lived, her invention would supply her with the means of making a more particular discovery. She resolved, therefore, on going again to the shop, under the pretence of buying something, and asking the mercer himself, who she could not imagine would have any interest in concealing what she desired to know.

Some

Some company coming in, prevented her from going that afternoon; but she went the next morning after breakfast. The mercer not happening to be at home, she was more than once tempted by her impatience to ask for his wife, and as often restrained by the reflection, that such a thing might be looked upon as a piece of impertinence in a person so much a stranger: she left the house without speaking to any body but the man she had seen the day before.

Her curiosity, however, would not perhaps have suffered her to stop here, if something of more moment had not fallen out to engage her attention, and put the other out of her head for the present.

The nobleman on whom Mr. Munden depended for the gift so often mentioned in this history, had been a long time out of town, and was but lately returned. He had heard in the country that Mr. Munden was married, and that his wife was very beautiful and accomplished,

On Mr. Munden's going to pay his compliments to him on his arrival,—“ I congratulate you,” said he; — “ I am told you are married, and have got one
“ of

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“ of the prettiest and most amiable women in London for a wife.”

“ As to beauty, my Lord,” replied he, “ there is no certain standard for it, and I am entirely of the poet’s mind, that

“ ’Tis in no face, but in the lover’s eye.”

“ But whatever she is,” continued he, “ I am afraid she would be too vain if she knew the honour your Lordship does her, in making this favourable mention of her.”

“ Not at all,” rejoined the Peer, but “ I shall not take her character from common fame ; — you must give me leave to be a judge of the perfections I have heard so much talk of ; besides,” pursued he, “ I have a mind to see what sort of a house you keep ; — I think I will come some day, and take a dinner with you.”

It is not to be doubted but that Mr. Munden omitted nothing that might assure his Lordship, that it was an honour which he was extremely ambitious of, and should be equally proud of receiving, though

though he durst not have presumed to have asked it.

The very next day being appointed for this grand visit, he went home to his wife, transported with the gracious behaviour of his patron towards him. He threw a large parcel of guineas into her lap, and charged her to spare nothing that might entertain their noble guest in a manner befitting his high rank, and the favours he expected one day to receive from him.

Mr. Munden could not have given any commands that would be more pleasing to his fair wife. — Feasting and grand company were her delight. She set about making the necessary preparations with the greatest alacrity imaginable; and it must be acknowledged, that considering the shortness of the time, she had sufficient to have employed the most able and experienced housewife.



C H A P. XII.

It only prelude to greater matters.

IT might justly be reckoned a piece of impertinence to take up the reader's time with a repetition of the bill of fare of the entertainment made on the above occasion; it will be sufficient to say, that every thing was extremely elegant; that it was composed of the best chosen dishes, which were all served up in the greatest order; and that there was as great a variety of them as consisted with the table of a private gentleman, without incurring the censure of profuseness.

Such as it was, however, the noble Lord seemed highly delighted with it; he praised every thing that came before him, almost to a degree of flattery, and took all opportunities of being yet more lavish in his encomiums on the beauty, wit, and elegance of the fair provider.

Mr. Munden was transported, within himself at the satisfaction his patron expressed, and his wife also felt a secret joy on
hearing

hearing the fine things said of her, which sparkled in her eyes, and gave an additional lustre to all her charms.

This Nobleman, though past what is called the prime of life, was far from having arrived at those years which bring on decay; — he was besides of a sanguin, vigorous complexion — had a very graceful person — a fine address — a great affluence of wit, and something so soft and engaging in his manner of behaviour to the ladies, as rendered him still a prodigious favourite with them.

He was too good a judge of what is amiable in womankind, not to discover immediately the many perfections Mrs. Munden was mistress of; — he felt the whole force of her charms, and as he loved beauty more for his own sake than for that of the possessor, and never liked without desiring to enjoy, his eyes told her at every glance, that he languished for an opportunity of declaring in a different manner the sentiments he had for her.

Mrs. Munden perfectly understood the language in which she found herself addressed; but had she been less learned in it, an explanation soon presented itself.

Her

MISS BETSY THOUGHTLESS. 121

Her husband stepping to the head of the stair-case to give some orders to a servant, the peer took hold of one of her hands, and kissing it with the utmost raptures, ‘Divine creature,’ cried he, ‘how unjust is fortune; that a face and person so formed for universal adoration, is not placed in a higher and more conspicuous sphere of life!’

She had not time to make any reply,—Mr. Munden returned that moment,—nor had the noble Lord the least opportunity while he stayed of speaking one word to her that was improper for a husband to be witness of.

He prolonged the time of his departure to a greater length than could have been expected from a person, whose high office in the state permitted him much fewer hours of leisure, than those in middling stations of life are happy enough to enjoy :—when he went away he assured both the husband and the wife, that he quitted them with the utmost reluctance, and that he had never past a day more agreeably in his whole life.

Mr. Munden was now in such high good humour, that he no sooner found himself alone with his fair wife, than he

took her in his arms, and kissed her very heartily : — a favour not common with him since the first week of their marriage. — He told her moreover she had behaved that day like an angel, — that nothing could be more elegant than the dinner she had prepared, and that he could not have expected such a variety of covers; and so fine a desert for the money he gave her for that purpose.

‘ I think myself very happy,’ answered she, ‘ that you approve so well of my management; but I fancy,’ continued she, with a smile, ‘ you will have some better opinion of my œconomy, when I shall tell you, that it cost less than you imagine.’

‘ Is it possible!’ cried he, in a pleasing surprize : ‘ I rather thought you had been kind enough to have added somewhat out of your own pocket, to render the entertainment so perfectly complete.’

‘ No, I assure you,’ resumed she, there remains no less than these three guineas of the sum you allowed me for this day’s expence.’ — With these words, she laid the pieces she had mentioned on the table; which he was so ungenerous as to
take

take immediately up, and put into his own pocket.

‘ Nay, Mr. Munden,’ said she, while he was putting up the money — ‘ this is
 ‘ not dealing altogether so fairly by me, as
 ‘ I have done by you : — I expected, that
 ‘ the trouble I have been at, deserved at
 ‘ least to be rewarded with what I have
 ‘ saved by my frugality.’

‘ Take care, my dear,’ replied he, laughing, ‘ how you lessen the merit of
 ‘ what you have done, — I am willing to
 ‘ take it as an obligation to me ; and sure
 ‘ you value an obligation to me at a much
 ‘ higher rate than three pieces.’

Though all this passed on both sides in a jocular way, yet as it served to shew the niggardness of Mr. Munden’s temper, cannot be supposed to have increased either the love or respect his wife had for him.

She made, however, no other answer to what he had last said, than to tell him, that she found he was fashionable enough to suffer virtue to be its own reward, and then turned the conversation ; and continued in the same chearful humour as before any mention had been made of the three guineas : — Mr. Munden did not go abroad the whole evening, but whether he chose to sup at home, for the

pleasure of enjoying his wife's company, or for the sake of re-partaking the remainder of those dainties which had been so highly praised at dinner, is a point, which perhaps might admit of some dispute.

It is certain, indeed, the yet unsubdued vanity of this young lady, made her feel so much innate satisfaction in the admiration their noble visiter had expressed of her person and accomplishments, as gave a double sprightliness to her conversation that whole evening, and might perhaps render her more than ordinarily lovely in the eyes of her husband.

It was very far from being an improbability, that some people may be apt to imagine she built a little too much on the veracity of the praises bestowed upon her by that nobleman; but those who think this way, will be convinced of their error, when they shall presently find how far her conjectures were justified in this point.

She was sitting the next morning in a careless posture at one of the windows that looked into the street, ruminating sometimes on one thing, and sometimes on another; when she could not help observing a fellow on the other side of the way,

way, who kept walking backwards and forwards before the house, which, though he frequently passed thirty or forty paces, yet he took care never to lose sight of.

This seemed a little odd to her, as she sat there a considerable time, and the man still continued on his post :— she doubted not but that he wanted to speak with some one or other of her family, but had not the least notion his business was with herself.

Being told breakfast waited for her, she went into her dressing-room, where she usually took it, and thought no further of the man, 'till Mr. Munden was dressed and gone out ; but in less than a minute after he was so, she received intelligence from her footman, that there was a person had a letter for her, and said he would deliver it into no hands but her own.

On this she ran immediately down stairs, and found, to her great surprise, that he was no other than the fellow that she had seen loitering so long about the house. — ‘ I am ordered, madam,’ said he, ‘ to give you this,’ and at the same time presented her with a letter :— ‘ From whom does it come ?’ demanded she : ‘ I am ignorant,’ answered he, ‘ both of the
 G 3 & person !

‘ person who sent it, and the business it
 ‘ contains : — my orders were only to de-
 ‘ liver it into your own hands ;’ and with
 these words went away with all the speed
 he could.

It must be confessed a married woman
 ought not to have received a letter brought
 her in this manner, and without knowing
 whence it came ; but curiosity prevailed
 above discretion, and she hastily opening
 it, found it contained these lines :

To Mrs. MUNDEN.

“ LOVELIEST of your SEX.

“ AS not to adore you would be
 “ the greatest proof of insensibility, so
 “ not to wish, and even attempt every
 “ thing consistent with the character of a
 “ man of honour, for the obtaining some
 “ reward for that adoration, would be the
 “ most stupid piece of self-denial, becom-
 “ ing only of a stoick, or one less dead to
 “ all the joys of life. — The force of your
 “ charms has made the conquest of a
 “ heart, which only waits a favourable
 “ opportunity of throwing itself at your
 “ feet, not altogether without hope,
 “ spite of the circumstances you are in,
 “ of being in some measure acceptable
 “ to

“ to you, — at least it shall be so, if
 “ the most ardent and perfect passion that
 “ ever was, joined with the power and
 “ will of rendering you all manner of
 “ services, can give it merit in your
 “ eyes.

“ A very short time, I flatter myself,
 “ will explain to you what at present
 “ may seem a mystery: — benignant love
 “ will furnish the most faithful of his vo-
 “ taries with the means of declaring him-
 “ self at full; and the flame with which
 “ he is inspired, instruct him also to give
 “ you such testimonies of his everlasting
 “ attachment, as the good understand-
 “ ing you are mistress of, will not per-
 “ mit you to reject: ’Till when, I only
 “ beseech you to think with some share
 “ of tenderness on

“ Your concealed adorer.”

Utterly impossible is it to describe the situation of Mrs. Munden’s mind, after having several times read over this epistle, and well examined the purport of it: — she doubted not one moment, but that it was dictated by the noble Lord she had seen the day before, and whose behaviour to her had in some degree corresponded with the sentiments contained in it. — If her vanity was delighted with the conquest

she had made ; her pride was shocked at that assurance, which the daring lover seemed to flatter himself with of gaining her ; and her virtue much more alarmed at the attempts which his rank and fortune might embolden him to make for that end.

At first she was resolved to shew the letter to her husband the moment he came home, and acquaint him with her sentiments on the matter, that he might take proper precautions to prevent her from being exposed to any future attacks from this dangerous nobleman.

But on more mature deliberation, her mind changed : — Mr. Munden was at present in tolerable good humour with her ; — she was willing, if possible, to preserve it in him ; and as she could not but think an information of this kind would give him a great deal of uneasiness, so she had also reason to apprehend the effects of it might, in some measure, innocent as she was, fall upon herself.

He had never yet discovered the least emotions of jealousy, and she knew not what suspicions her having received such a letter from one person might raise in him

him, in relation to others. — ‘He may, possibly’ — said she to herself, ‘look upon every man that visits me, as an invader of his right, and consequently I shall be debarred from all conversation with the sex.

‘Besides,’ continued she, ‘I am not certain, that this letter was sent me by the noble Lord, or that he has in reality entertained any designs to the prejudice of my virtue; — there is, indeed, a strong probability of it; even by his behaviour towards me yesterday; yet it may not be so, — appearances often deceive us; and I might take that for the effects of love, which proceeded only from complaisance; but whatever his intentions are, it would certainly be the extreme folly and madness in me to enflame Mr. Munden against a person on whom his interest so much depends.’

‘It is no matter, therefore,’ went she still on, ‘whether it be the noble Lord in question, or any other person, who presumes to think so meanly of me, as to address me in this audacious manner; it is doubtless in my power to keep out of the way of receiving any farther insults from him; and I am sufficiently

“capable myself of being guardian of
 “my own honour, without disturbing a
 “husband’s peace about it.”

Thus ended the debate she had within herself on this occasion: — she committed her letter to the flames; and resolved, that if ever the author was hardy enough to discover himself, to treat him with all the contempt due to him from affronted virtue.



C H A P. XIII.

Contains what every reader of an ordinary capacity, may, by this time, easily guess at.

SOME of my readers will, doubtless, think Mrs. Munden entirely justified in making a secret of the above-mention’d letter to her husband, as she did so in regard to his peace; but others again who maintain that there ought to be no reserve between persons so closely united, will condemn her for it; — for my part, I shall forbear to give my vote upon the matter: and only say, that if she had not acted with less prudence soon after, she might have saved herself a very great shock, and her husband much vexation.

It

MISS BETSY THOUGHTLESS. 131

It was no more than three days after the great man had dined there, that Mr. Munden received a billet from him, which contained as follows :

TO GEORGE MUNDEN, ESQ;

“ Dear Munden,

“ I HAVE so few days that I can call
“ my own, that I am willing to make
“ those few as happy as I can; and on
“ that motive desire your’s, and your
“ amiable wife’s company to dinner with
“ me to-morrow ; — I leave you to make
“ both my request and compliments ac-
“ ceptable to her, and am,

“ With all sincerity,

“ Dear Munden,

“ Yours, &c. &c.

* * * *

P.S. “ I shall have a female relation with
“ me, who will rejoice in an opportu-
“ nity of becoming acquainted with
“ Mrs Munden.”

Mr. Munden desired the servant, who brought this, to give his own and wife’s
G 6 most

most humble duty to his Lord, and assure his Lordship they would not fail to attend his commands.

Some friends being with him, when this invitation was brought, hindered him from saying any thing of it at that time to his wife; but they were no sooner gone, than with an air and voice elated even to an excess, he told her of the high favour conferred upon them by his Right Honourable Patron.

Mrs. Munden was now more than ever convinced of the base designs Lord **** had upon her, and that the letter she had received was sent by him: — she therefore immediately determined within herself, to let him see, by her not complying with this invitation, that she was neither ignorant what his intentions were, nor would do any thing that might give him the least encouragement to prosecute them.

But as she still judged it was wholly improper to acquaint Mr. Munden with any thing of the affair, she could form no other contrivance to avoid accompanying him in this visit, than by pretending herself seized with a sudden indisposition, which she resolved to do some few hours before

MISS BETSY THOUGHTLESS. 133

before the arrival of that wherein they should set out.

If she had persisted in this mind, it would have been highly laudable indeed; — but, alas! the next morning inspired her with very different sentiments; — vanity, that sly subverter of our best resolutions, suggested to her, that there was no necessity for her behaving in the manner she had designed.

‘What should I fear?’ said she to herself, ‘what danger threatens either my virtue, or my reputation? — A wife may certainly go any where with her husband, — besides a lady will be there, — a relation of his Lordship’s, — he can communicate nothing to me in their presence, that I should blush to hear, and it would be rather ridiculous prudery than discretion in me, to deny myself the satisfaction of such good company.’

It must be acknowledged, for it but too plainly appears from every circumstance of this lady’s conduct, both before and after marriage, that the unhappy propensity in her nature, for attracting universal admiration, rendered her little regardful either of the guilt, or the dis-
quiets

quiets to which her beauty was accessary : — if she was admired and loved, she cared not to what end ; — in short, it made her, perfectly uncorrupt and pure as her own inclinations were, rather triumph in, than regret the power she had of inspiring the most inordinate and vicious ones in others.

Thus, more delighted than alarmed, she equipp'd herself with all the arts and labour'd industry of female pride, for securing the conquest she had gained, — safe as she imagined herself from all the encroachments of presumptuous love, she pleased herself with the thoughts of being looked upon by the adoring Peer, as Adam did upon the forbidden fruit ; — longing, wishing, but not daring to approach.

She had but just finished her embellishments, and was looking in the great glass to see if all was right, when Mr. Munden sent up stairs to know if she was ready, and to tell her his noble patron had sent his own chariot to fetch them : — on hearing this, she immediately tript down stairs, singing as she went, this part of an old song,

With

MISS BETSY THOUGHTLESS. 135

With an air and a face,
And a shape and a grace,
Let me charm like Beauty's goddess.

Oh, how will the prudent, reserved part of the sex lament, that a young lady, endued with so many perfections, so many amiable qualities, should thus persevere in a vanity of which she had already experienced such vexatious consequences.

Lord **** received them in a fashion, which fully gratified the ambition of Mr. Munden, and the yet less warrantable expectations of his wife: — the lady mentioned in the letter, was already with him, who, on his Lordship's presenting Mrs. Munden to her, saluted her with abundance of sweetness and good breeding: — she was a person of about thirty years of age, had been extremely handsome, and still retained the remains of charms, which must have been very powerful in their bloom, — nor was her conversation less agreeable than her person; — she said little indeed, but what she said was extremely to the purpose, and very entertaining: — there was notwithstanding a certain air of melancholy about her, which she in vain attempted to conceal, tho' it was easy to perceive
she

she made use of her utmost efforts for that purpose.

His Lordship was extremely gay and spirituous, as indeed were all the company, during the whole time at dinner; but it was no sooner over, than he said to Mr. Munden,—‘ Dear Munden, I have a
 • business to communicate to you, which
 • these ladies must forgive me if I make
 • a secret of to them; ’—with these words he took Mr. Munden into another room, and spoke to him in the following manner:

‘ A person,’ said he, ‘ has been guilty
 • of an action in regard to me, which it
 • is neither consistent with my honour,
 • or my humour to put up with; — I
 • will shew you;’ continued he, giving him an unsealed letter, ‘ what I have
 • wrote to him upon the occasion, and
 • that will instruct you how I intend to
 • proceed, and at the same time convince
 • you of the confidence I repose in your
 • friendship.’

Mr. Munden took the letter out of his Lordship’s hands, and found the contents as follows:

To

MISS BETSY THOUGHTLESS. 137

To WILLIAM W —, Esq;

“ S I R,

“ THOUGH the affront you have
“ offered me deserves the severest treat-
“ ment, yet in consideration of our former
“ intimacy, I shall wave my Peerage, and
“ require no other satisfaction from you
“ than what any private gentleman has a
“ right to demand of another, in a case
“ of the like nature.

“ I shall be in the Green Park to-mor-
“ row about eight in the morning, where
“ I believe you have honour enough to
“ meet me : — bring with you any one
“ person you think fit : — the gentleman,
“ who puts this into your hands, will ac-
“ company me.

“ Not that I mean our friends should
“ be engaged in the quarrel, but think it
“ proper, that there should be some wit-
“ nesses, that no foul play is attempted
“ on either side.—I am,

“ Expecting your ready compliance,

“ S I R,

“ Yours, &c.

* * * *

! You

‘ You see, Munden,’ said he, perceiving he had done reading, ‘ the assurance I build on the sincerity of your attachment to me.’ ‘ Your Lordship does me an infinity of honour,’ replied the other with a low bow, ‘ and I have nothing to regret, but that my sword must lie idle while your Lordship is employed,’

‘ As for that,’ — resumed the Peer, ‘ I always thought it the utmost folly and injustice to set two people on cutting one another’s throats, merely in compliment to their friends : ——— but, my dear Munden,’ — pursued he, looking on his watch ; ‘ I would have you go immediately ; — I believe you will find him at the Cocoa-Tree ; he is generally there about this hour, — but if not, they will direct you where to find him.’

He sealed the letter while he was speaking, which being again delivered to Mr. Munden, they both returned into the room where the ladies were. ——— Mr. Munden stayed no longer than while his footman called a hackney coach to the door : as he was going out, the Nobleman said to him, ‘ I doubt not but you will be back as soon as possible, in the mean
time

MISS BETSY THOUGHTLESS. 139

‘ time we three will amuse ourselves with
‘ a game at ombre.’

Mrs. Munden was a good deal surprised at her husband’s departure; but had much more reason to be so, as well as alarmed, in a moment or two after.

Cards were but just laid upon the table, when a servant came hastily, and told the lady a messenger had brought word that her mother was suddenly seized with an apoplectic fit; ——— that it was not yet known whether the old lady would recover, and that she must come home that instant.

On this she started up, seemed in a most terrible fright, and took her leave with a precipitation natural enough to the occasion, in a daughter possessed of any share of duty or affection.

This part of the history must be very unintelligible indeed, if the reader has not by this time seen, that all this was but a feint contrivance by the amorous Nobleman, in order to get an opportunity of employing the whole battery of his rhetoric against the virtue he was impatient to triumph over.

This

This pretended kinswoman was in fact, no more than a cast-off mistress of his Lordship's, but having her dependance entirely upon him, was obliged to submit in every thing to his will, and become an assistant to those pleasures with others, which she no longer could afford him in her own person.

She was brought to his house that day for two reasons,—first,—as he knew not what fears, and what apprehensions the beauty of Mrs. Munden might raise in her husband, and render him suspicious of the true motive of his being sent away, had no other company been there;—and secondly to prevent that fair intended victim of his unwarrantable flame, from being too suddenly alarmed at finding herself alone with him.

Mrs. Munden, however, had no time to examine into the meaning of what she saw, and all she could recollect in that instant was, that she was in the house, and wholly in the power of a person, who had designs upon her, to which neither her honour, nor her inclinations, would permit her to acquiesce, and trembled for the event, but concealing the disorders of her mind as much as possible, — ‘ Well, my Lord,’—said she, taking

taking up the cards, and beginning to shuffle them, 'since we are deprived of a third person by this melancholy accident, what think your Lordship of a game at picquet?'

'I think,' answered he, looking upon her with eyes, which redoubled all her terrors ;— 'that to waste the precious time in cards, and throw away the golden opportunity of telling you how much my soul adores you, would be a stupidity, which neither love, nor fortune could forgive me for.'

In speaking these words he snatched one of her hands, and in spite of her endeavours to withdraw it, pressed it to his mouth with an eagerness, which would have convinced her, if she had not been so before, of the vehemence of those desires with which he was enflamed.

'Fie, my Lord,' cried she, with an air as haughty and reserved as it was in the power of any woman to assume, 'this is not language with which the wife of him you are pleased to call your friend, could expect to be entertained.'

'Unreasonably urged, cried he: ought my friendship to the husband render me

' me insensible to the beauties of the wife?
 ' — Or would your generous consenting
 ' to reward my passion dissolve the union
 ' between us?—No; on the contrary, it
 ' would rather be cemented; — I should
 ' then love him not only for his own, but
 ' for your sake also, and should think my-
 ' self bound to stretch my power to its ex-
 ' tremest limits to do him service: — be-
 ' assured, my angel, that in blessing me you
 ' fix the happiness of your husband, and
 ' establish his future fortune in the world.'

These words, joined to Mr. Munden's
 being gone away, she knew not on what
 errand, made her shudder with the appre-
 hensions, that he might have been tempted
 by the hopes of interest to become yield-
 ing to the dishonourable intentions of his
 patron; but willing to be more confirm'd,
 — ' I hope, my Lord, answered she. that
 ' you cannot think Mr. Munden has so
 ' mean a soul to accept of an establishment
 ' on such condition.'

' I could name some husbands, and
 ' those of the first rank too,' said he,
 ' who, to oblige a friend, and for parti-
 ' cular reasons, have consented to the
 ' complaisance of their wives in this
 ' point; but I desire no such sacrifice
 ' from Mr. Munden; there is no ne-
 ' cessity

MISS BETSY THOUGHTLESS. 143

‘ necessity for it, I have now sent him on a
‘ pretence too plausible for him to suspect
‘ the real motive of my wanting to get
‘ rid of him : — I had a lady here also
‘ for no other end than to prevent him
‘ feeling any disquiet on leaving us alone
‘ together ; — I shall always take the
‘ same precautions, — all our interviews
‘ shall be as private as your own wishes,
‘ and my happiness be an eternal secret
‘ to the whole world as well as to your
‘ husband.

‘ Come then, my charmer,’ added he,
attempting to take her in his arms ; — we
‘ have no time to lose, — away then with
‘ all idle scruples ; — yield to my em-
‘ braces ; — assist my raptures, and be
‘ assured that my whole soul, — my for-
‘ tune, and all my power can give, shall
‘ be at your disposal.

It was the discomposure of Mrs. Munden’s mind, which alone hindered her from interrupting him during the former part of his speech, but the close of it, joined with the action which accompanied it, obliged her to collect all her scattered spirits, and flying to the other end of the room, in order to avoid his grasp, — ‘ Forbear, my Lord, said she, —
‘ know I despise your offers ; and set my
‘ virtue

‘ virtue at a much higher rate, than all
 ‘ the advantages you, or the whole world
 ‘ would give in exchange.’

Lord **** finding he had to do with a mistress of uncommon spirit, thought best to alter the manner of his addresses to her, and approaching her with an air much more humble and submissive than he had hitherto done, — ‘ How I adore,’ cried he, ‘ this noble disinterestedness in
 ‘ you ; — you will grant nothing but to
 ‘ love alone, — be it so : — your beauty is
 ‘ indeed above all other price. — Let your
 ‘ husband reap all the advantages, and let
 ‘ it be yours to have the pleasure, like
 ‘ Heaven, to save from despair the man
 ‘ who cannot live without you.’

Perceiving, or at least imagining he perceived some abatement in the fierceness of her eyes, on the change of his deportment, he persisted in it, — he even threw himself on his knees before her ; — took hold of her hands, — bathed them alternately with tears, then dried them with his kisses : — in a word, he omitted nothing that the most passionate love, resolute to accomplish its gratification, could suggest to soften her into compliance.

At

At another time, how would the vanity of this lady have been elated to see a person of such high consideration in the world, thus prostrate at her feet ; but at this, the reflection how much she was in his power, and the uncertainty how far he might exert that power, put to silence all the dictates of her pride; and rendered her, in reality, much more in awe of him than he affected to be of her :—she turned her eyes continually towards the door, in hopes of seeing Mr. Munden enter ; and never had she wish'd for his presence with the impatience she now did.

The noble Lord equally dreaded his return, and finding the replies she made to his pressures somewhat more moderate than they had been on the first opening his suit, flatter'd himself that a very little compulsion would complete the work :— he therefore resolved to dally no longer, and having usher'd in his design with a prelude of some warm kisses and embraces, was about to draw her into another room.

She struggled with all her might ; but her efforts that way being in vain, she shriek'd, and call'd aloud for help. — This a little shock'd him ;—he let her go :
 ' What do you mean, madam ?' said he : —

Vol. IV.

H

' Would

‘ Would you expose yourself and me to the ridicule of my servants?’—‘ I will expose myself to any thing,’ answered she, ‘ rather than to the ruin and everlasting infamy your Lordship is preparing for me.’

‘ Call not by so harsh a name,’ cried he, ‘ the effects of the most tender passion that ever was :—by Heavens I love you more than life ;—nay, life without you is not worth the keeping.’—Speaking these words he was about to lay hold of her again, and her cries having brought no body to her assistance, she must infallibly have been lost, if her better angel had not in that instant directed her eyes to a bell, which hung in the pannel of the wainscot just behind the door of the room into which he was forcing her, — she snatch’d the handle, and rung it with such vehemence that it resounded through the house.

This action made him release her with a kind of an indignant sting, and a servant immediately coming up, — ‘ I believe,’ said she to him, ‘ my servant is below,—pray order him to call me a chair this moment.’—The Peer, not often accusom’d to such rebuffs, was so much confounded at the strength of her resolution,

MISS BETSY THOUGHTLESS. 147

tion, that he had not power to utter one word, and she fearing another assault, ran to the door, which the footman hastily shut after him, and having opened it, — ‘Your Lordship,’ said she, ‘has used me in a manner neither worthy of yourself nor me, — I leave you to blush at the remembrance.’

She waited not to hear what reply he would have made, but flew down stairs into the hall, where a chair being presently brought, she threw herself into it, extremely disconcerted in her dress as well as mind.



CHAP. XIV.

Contains a brief recital of several very remarkable, and equally affecting occurrences, of which the last mentioned extraordinary adventure was productive, and which may justly enough be looked upon as yet more extraordinary than even the adventure itself.

MR. Munden, who was no less pleased and vain on the confidence his noble patron seemed to repose in him, than he

was ambitious of the favours he hoped to receive from him, had been extremely diligent in the execution of that commission he had been entrusted with, but found much more difficulty in it than he could have imagined.

He was told at the bar of the Cocoa-Tree, that the gentleman he enquired for had not been there since morning ;—that Sir John F— had taken him home with him to dinner, and that in all probability they were still together.

Mr. Munden on this order'd the coachman to drive to Mark-lane with all the speed he could ; but had, on his coming there, the mortification to hear, that Mr. W— had left Sir John about a quarter of an hour before, and was gone to the other end of the town ; on which he drove back to the Cocoa-Tree, thinking he might now meet him there, but was again disappointed.

They informed him, however, that Mr. W— had just called in, but staid no longer than to tell them he would be there again in half an hour. — Mr. Munden was impatient at this delay, but could not think of returning to Lord ****, without having done the business he was sent upon :

upon: he therefore sat down, and waited 'till the other came, which was somewhat sooner than the time he had been made to hope.

These gentlemen, though far from being intimately acquainted, were not altogether strangers, having frequently met at the levee of Lord ****.—They now saluted each other with the utmost politeness, after which, Mr. Munden drawing him to the most retired part of the room, ‘I have had a chace after you, ‘sir,’ said he, ‘for a good part of this ‘afternoon, and which would have been ‘impertinent in me, if not excuseable by ‘my being under an indispenfable obligation of seeing you.’

‘Then, sir,’ replied the other, ‘whatever the business be, I shall think myself ‘happy in being found.’—‘This, sir, will ‘inform you,’ said Mr. Munden, giving him the letter. ‘From Lord ****,’ cried Mr. W—, as soon as he saw the superscription,—‘It is so,’ answered Mr. Munden, ‘and I am heartily sorry for the occasion.’

Mr. W—, made no reply to what Mr. Munden said, ‘till he had examined the contents of the letter; and then after putting

ting it into his pocket with a careless air,
 ‘ I see into the meaning of this,’ said he ;
 ‘ an ugly accident, which I have but
 ‘ lately discovered, has, I believe, misre-
 ‘ presented me to his Lordship :—could I
 ‘ be capable of what he at present thinks
 ‘ I am, I should be utterly unworthy of
 ‘ the condescension he vouchsafes me by
 ‘ this invitation ; — but, sir, all this is
 ‘ founded on a mistake, which may ea-
 ‘ sily be rectify’d ;—I will not give his
 ‘ Lordship the trouble of going to the
 ‘ Green Park ; I will wait on him at
 ‘ his own house, at the hour he mentions,
 ‘ and if what I have to say to him, does
 ‘ not fully convince him of my innocence,
 ‘ will follow either to that, or any other
 ‘ place he pleases, though no consideration
 ‘ in the world, except his own commands,
 ‘ should compel me to draw my sword
 ‘ against a breast I so much love and re-
 ‘ verence.’

Mr. Munden replied, that he should be
 extremely glad to find an affair, which
 at present seemed to threaten such fatal
 consequences, was amicably made up ; and
 after having assured him, that he would
 deliver what he had said, to his Lordship,
 in the most exact manner, was about to
 take his leave, but could not do it so
 soon as he desired, the other still detain-
 ing

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ing him by beginning some subject or other of conversation, which, how frivolous soever, Mr. Munden could not break off too suddenly without incurring censure of abruptness, and ill manners.

Lord **** in the mean time was in the utmost agitation; — not for the return of Mr. Munden, for he very well knew the message he would bring, but that he had taken a great deal of pains to no purpose: — the beauty of Mrs. Munden had inspired him with the most eager desire of enjoying her; — the gaiety of her temper, joined to the temptations in his power to offer, had given him an almost assured hope of gaining her; — and now to find himself thus repulsed, — repulsed with such disdain, left a surprize upon him which very much increased the shock of his disappointment.

Besides, as he doubted not but she would inform her husband of all that had passed between them, it gave the most mortal stab to that haughtiness too incident to opulence and grandeur, to reflect he had given a man, so much beneath him, an opportunity of triumphing over him in his mind.

He had not recovered his confusion, and was walking backwards and forwards in his drawing-room, with a disordered motion, when Mr. Munden returned, to whom he never spoke, nor look'd upon. The satisfaction this gentleman had felt on finding the business of his embassy was like to terminate so happily, was very much damped at seeing himself received in this manner.

'I did not expect to find your Lordship alone,' said Mr. Munden.—'I believe not,' replied he; 'but an unlucky accident at home deprived me of my cousin's company, and your wife it seems did not think herself safe with me.'

These last words, and the contemptuous tone in which they were expressed, put him into the extremest consternation:—'I hope, my Lord,' cried he, 'that Mrs. Munden cannot have so far forgot herself as to have acted in any manner unbecoming of the respect due to your Lordship.'—'Fine women will have their caprices,' resumed the Peer;—'but no matter, let no more be said of it.'

Mr. Munden then proceeded to repeat what Mr. W— had said to him; but his Lord

Lordship took no notice, and seemed entirely unconcerned all the time he was speaking; 'till the other adding, that if his Lordship thought proper, he would attend him in the morning, in order to be at hand, in case the event should require his presence: — on which the Peer replied peevishly,—‘ No, no;—you need not come, — I believe there will be no occasion; — if there be, I can send for you.’

After this, Mr. Munden easily perceiving his company was rather troublesome than agreeable, made a low obeisance, and withdrew, almost distracted in his mind at this sudden turn of temper in his patron, and no less impatient to hear what his wife had to say on that account.

It was not in one of the best of humours, as the reader may easily imagine, that he now came home, nor did he find Mrs. Munden in one very proper to alleviate his vexation. She was extremely pensive, and when he asked her in somewhat of an imperious voice the reason of having left Lord **** in so abrupt a manner, ‘ When you,’ said she, ‘ forsook the guardianship of my honour, it was time for me to take the defence of it upon myself,

‘ which I could do no other way than by flight.’

‘ What is it you mean?’ cried he,—‘ I am certain my Lord has too much friendship for me, to offer any rudeness to you.’—‘ Be not too certain,’ answered she, ‘ of the friendship of that base great man.’—She then began to repeat the discourse with which his Lordship had entertained her, after being left alone with him, but had gone through a very small part of it, before her husband interrupted her, saying with a kind of malicious sneer, — that he was positive there was nothing at all in what she apprehended; — that it was impossible for the noble Lord to be in earnest when he talked to her in such terms; — that she had only been deceived by her own vanity, to mistake for a serious design upon her virtue, what was only meant for meer gallantry; — and then added with more passion, that he feared her idle resentment had lost him all his interest with the best of friends.

‘ Good Heaven!’ — cried she, — ‘ defend me, and all virtuous women from such gallantries; — but know, sir,’ continued she, with a great deal of vehemence, — ‘ that but for that idle re-
sentment,

‘sentment, as you are pleased to call it,
‘my ruin and your dishonour would have
‘been completed by this best of friends.’

‘How!’ said Mr. Munden eagerly, —
‘he did not sure proceed to action?’
Perceiving he was now in a disposition
to listen with more attention to what
she said than hitherto he had done, she
hesitated not to acquaint him with every
particular of his Lordship’s behaviour to
her, and the means by which she had de-
fended herself.

During this recital, Mr. Munden bit
his lips, and appeared in very great emo-
tions: — he spoke not a word however,
till his fair wife, pitying the anxieties she
saw him under, desired him to think no
more of this accident since it was so hap-
pily got over: — ‘It may be so in your
‘opinion,’ answered he fiercely, — but
‘not in mine: — I foresee the conse-
‘quences, though you, perhaps, think
‘not of them.—’Tis true, my Lord’s be-
‘haviour is not to be justified, nor can
‘yours in regard to me be so; you ought
‘to have considered the dependence I
‘had on him, and not have carried
‘things with so high an hand; — you
‘might have doubtless evaded this at-
‘tempt by more gentle, and less affron-

‘ five methods; but that cursed pride of
 ‘ yours must be gratified, though at the
 ‘ expence of all my expectations.’ —
 With these words he flung out of the
 room, and this was all the return she met
 with from her ungrateful husband, for
 having resisted with such courage and re-
 solution, temptations, which some women
 would have thought themselves absolved
 for yielding to the force of.

Ill-natured and perverse as Mr. Munden
 was, it must be confessed, that his present
 situation nevertheless merited some com-
 passion; — he had a great share of am-
 bition; — loved both pleasure and gran-
 deur to an excess; and though far from
 being of a generous disposition, the pride
 and vanity of his humour made him do
 many things through ostentation, which
 his estate would not well support: — he
 kept company with persons of rank and
 fortune, much superior to his own, and
 as he bore an equal part in their expences
 whenever he was with them, he stood
 in need of some addition to his revenue:
 —well therefore might he be chagrined
 at an accident, that cast so dark a cloud
 over that prospect of interest and prefer-
 ment he had flattered himself with from
 Lord ****

But

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But though this was the main point, it was not the sole subject of his discontent. — The motives for his being sent by Lord **** to Mr. W—, the pretended quarrel between them, and the trifling excuses made by the latter to detain him from making too quick a return, were all too obvious for him not to be assured that gentleman was privy, and agreed to be an assistant in the design his lordship had upon his wife.

Mr. W—, though the representative of a borough in C—, was indeed no more than a creature of Lord ****, to whose interest alone he was indebted for his seat in parliament; but it was not because Mr. Munden knew him to be obliged to do every thing enjoined by his Lordship, that restrained the resentment he conceived against him from breaking out, but because he considered that a quarrel between them on this score might occasion the affair to become public, and expose both himself and wife to the ridicule of as many as should hear it.

Wrath, when enervate, especially if inflamed by any just provocation, is certainly very dreadful to be borne, and what this injured husband sustained in the first emotions of it, must have excited the pity of every reader of this history, if he
and

had not afterwards meanly vented it where he had not the least occasion for disgust, but rather of the highest love, tenderness, and admiration.

In the midst of these perplexities, however, let us leave him for a while, and return to her whose beauty had been the innocent cause of all this trouble to him, and danger to herself.

Wonderful indeed were the effects this last adventure produced in her; — many times before she had been on the very verge of ruin, and as often indebted merely to fortune for her preservation from the mischiefs, into which her inadvertency had almost plunged her; — but none of those dangers, — those escapes had ever been capable of making any lasting impression on her mind, or fixing her resolution to avoid running again into the same mistakes.

The cruel reproaches and reflections cast on her by Mr. Munden, filled her not now with the least resentment; for though she deserved them not upon the score he made them, yet she was conscious that she did so for going to the house of Lord ****, after having the strongest reasons

sons to believe he had dishonourable intentions upon her.

She blushed to remember, that she had given herself leave to be pleased at the thoughts of appearing amiable in the eyes of that great man :—‘ Good God !’ cried she, ‘ what infatuation possess’d me, — ‘ Am not I married ! — Is not all I am ‘ the property of Mr. Munden ! — Is it ‘ not highly criminal in any one to offer ‘ to invade his right ! — And can I be so ‘ wicked to take delight in the guilt to ‘ which I am in a manner accessary !’

‘ The vanities of my virgin state, continued she, ‘ might plead some excuse ; — ‘ but nothing now can be urged in my ‘ defence for persevering in them. — The ‘ pride of subduing hearts is mine no ‘ more ; — no man can now pretend to ‘ love me with but the basest and most ‘ shameful views. — The man who dares ‘ to tell me he adores me, contradicts ‘ himself by that very declaration, and ‘ while he would persuade me he has the ‘ highest opinion of me, discovers he has in reality the meanest.’

In fine, she now saw herself, and the errors of her past conduct in their true light.

light: — ‘How strange a creature have I
 • been!’ cried she, ‘how inconsistent with
 • myself! I knew the character of a co-
 • quet both silly and insignificant, yet did
 • every thing in my power to acquire it :
 • — I aimed to inspire awe and reverence
 • in the men, yet by my imprudence em-
 • boldened them to the most unbecoming
 • freedoms with me : — I had sense
 • enough to discern real merit in those
 • who profess’d themselves my lovers, yet
 • affected to treat most ill those, in whom
 • I found the greatest share of it. — Na-
 • ture has made me no fool, yet not one
 • action of my life has given any proof of
 • common reason.

• Even in the greatest, and most serious
 • affair of life, — that of marriage’ —
 added she, with a deep sigh, ‘have I not
 • been governed wholly by caprice! — I re-
 • jected Mr. Truworth only because I
 • thought I did not love him enough, yet
 • gave my hand to Mr. Munden, whom
 • at that time I did not love at all ; and
 • who has since, alas, taken little care to
 • cultivate that affection I have laboured
 • to feel for him.

In summing up this charge against her-
 self, she found that all her faults, and her
 misfortunes had been owing either to an

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excess of vanity ; — a mistaken pride, — or a false delicacy : — the two former appeared now too contemptible in her eyes for her not to determine utterly to extirpate. — But the latter she found less reason to correct, since it happened only in regard to Mr. Truworth, and could never happen again, as both their marriages had put a total end to all tender communication between them.

This change in Mrs. Munden's humour, great and sudden as it was, did not however prove a transient one : — every day, every hour confirmed her in it ; — and if at any time her natural vivacity made her seem a little pleased on hearing her wit, — her beauty, — or any other perfection or accomplishment, too lavishly extolled, she presently checked herself for it, and assumed a look of reserve, which, though less haughty than she had sometimes put on upon different occasions, had not the less effect, and seldom failed to awe the flatterer into silence ; a proof of which the reader will be immediately presented with.



C H A P. XV.

*Contains such things as will be pleasing to those,
whose candid dispositions interest them in favour
of the heroine of this history.*

NOthing so much encourages an unwarrantable passion for a married woman, as to know she has a husband regardless of her charms, — A young gay gentleman, a companion of Mr. Munden's, privy to most of his secrets, and partner with him in many a debauch, had seen Mrs. Munden at Miss Airish's, where she still continued to visit. He had entertained a kind of roving flame for her, which his friendship for her husband could not prevent him from wishing to gratify. But though they often met, he never could get an opportunity of declaring himself; — all he could do, was sometimes to whisper in her ear, that she was divinely handsome; — that he adored her; and that he died for her; — and such like stuff, which she was too often

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often accustomed to hear, to take much notice of.

The indifferent opinion which most men of pleasure, or in other words, genteel rakes of the town have of women in general, joined to the too great gaiety he had observed in Mrs. Munden's behaviour, made him imagine there required little more for the gaining her than the making his addresses to her; — the means of speaking to her in private seemed to him the sole difficulty he had to get over, and in order to do so he wrote to her in the following terms :

To Mrs. MUNDEN,

MADAM,

“ A FINE woman would reap little
“ advantage from the charms she is
“ mistress of, if confined to the languid
“ embraces of a single possessor: —
“ marriage takes off the poignancy of
“ desire; — a man has no relish for
“ beauties that are always the same, and
“ always in his power; those endear-
“ ments, generally make his happiness be-
“ come disgustful to him, by being his
“ duty, and he naturally flies to seek joys
“ yet untasted in the arms of others: —
“ this, fair angel, is the case with us
“ all

“ all; — you have too much good sense
 “ not to know it, or to expect your husband
 “ should vary from his sex in this
 “ particular.

“ Let those unhappy women therefore
 “ to whom nature has been niggard of
 “ her bounties, pine in an abandoned
 “ bed: — you are formed to give and to
 “ receive the most unbounded joys of
 “ love; — to bless, and to be blest with
 “ the utmost profusion of extacies unspeakable.

“ To tell you how infinitely I adore
 “ you, and how much I have languished
 “ for an opportunity of declaring my
 “ passion, would require a volume, instead
 “ of a letter; — besides, my pen
 “ would but faintly express the sentiments
 “ of my soul; — they will have more
 “ energy when whispered in your ear: —
 “ I know such a thing is impossible at
 “ your own house, or at any of those
 “ where you visit. — Favour me then I
 “ beseech you with taking a little walk
 “ in the Privy-garden near the water side,
 “ to-morrow about eleven, from which
 “ place, if my person and passion be
 “ not altogether disagreeable to you, we
 “ may adjourn to some other, where I
 “ may

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" may give you more substantial demon-
" strations how much I am,

" With the utmost sincerity,

" DEAR MADAM,

" Your eternally devoted,

" And most faithful admirer."

P.S. " I do not sign my name for fear
" of accidents ; but flatter myself my
" eyes have already said enough to in-
" form you who I am."

If this letter had come but a very small time before it did, 'tis possible that tho' Mrs. Munden would even then have been highly offended at the presumption, yet her vanity and curiosity might have excited her to give the meeting required in it by the author, though it had only been, as she would then have imagined, merely to see who he was, and laugh at his stupidity for addressing her in that manner.

Not but she had some distant guess at the person, but whether it was him, or any other who had taken this liberty, she now gave herself not the least concern : — she was only desirous to put an entire stop to those audacious hopes she found he had
enter-

entertained, and to keep herself from receiving any future solicitations from the same quarter at least.

To send back his letter without any other token of her resentment and disdain at the contents, she thought would not be sufficient, and her ready wit after a little pause, presented her with a method more efficacious ; — it was this :

She folded up the epistle in the same fashion it was when she received it, and inclosed it in another piece of paper, in which she wrote these lines :

S I R,

“ AS I cannot think any man would
 “ be weak enough to dictate an epistle
 “ of this nature to the wife of Mr. Munden, I must suppose you made some
 “ mistake in the direction, and sent that
 “ to me, which was intended for some
 “ other woman, whose character it might
 “ better agree with.

“ I must intreat you, however, to be
 “ more careful for the future, for if any
 “ such impertinence should a second time
 “ arise, I shall think myself obliged to
 “ make a confidante of my husband,
 “ whose

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“ whose good sense and penetration will
“ doubtless enable him to discover the
“ author, and his spirit and courage in-
“ struct him in what manner to resent
“ the affront offered to

“ His ever faithful,

“ And most affectionate wife,

B. MUNDEN.

This had all the effect she wished it should have — the beau was ashamed of the fruitless attack he had made; — wrote to her no more, — avoided her sight as much as possible, and whenever chance brought him into her company, behaved towards her with all the distance and respect imaginable.

This lady, now fully convinced how dangerous it was to be too much admired for her external charms, ceased even to wish they should be taken notice of, and set herself seriously about improving those perfections of the mind, which she was sensible could alone entitle her to the esteem of the virtuous and the wise.

Mr. Munden, who had never been disquieted at the former part of his wife's behaviour, was equally insensible of this altera-

alteration in her: — his cares, indeed, were too much taken up for re-establishing himself with his right honourable patron; to give any attention to what pass'd at home.

After much debating within himself, he thought it best to proceed, so as not to let the noble lord imagine he was acquainted with any part of the attempt made upon his wife; — but though he attended his levee as usual, — paid him the same compliments, and seemed rather more obsequious than ever, he had the mortification to find himself very coolly received. — He stood undistinguished in the circle which constantly waited the motion of that great man, — was scarcely spoke to by him, and then with a kind of an indrawn reserve, which made him justly enough apprehend, that he had little now to hope for from him.

The truth is, he saw through the policy of this dependant; — he could not doubt but Mrs. Munden had told him of the violence he had offered to her: — he was conscious of the baseness of it, but he was not angry with himself for it, tho' with the person he would have injured, and could not forgive him for the knowledge

ledge of his crime, though the other was willing to forgive the crime itself.

The treatment he received at lord ***** made him extremely churlish to his wife: — he looked upon her as the primary cause of his misfortune, cursed his marriage with her, and even hated her for the beauties and good qualities, which should have endeared her to him. — Nothing she could say, or do, had the power of pleasing him, so that she stood in need of all her courage and fortitude to enable her to support, with any tolerable degree of patience, the usage she received.

To heighten her misfortune, the late levity of her temper had hindered her from cultivating an acquaintance with any one person, on whose secrecy, sincerity, and sedateness she could enough depend, for the disburthening her mind of those vexations, with which it was sometimes overwhelmed.

But this was a matter of disquiet to her, which she had not long to complain of; — heaven sent her a consolation, of which she had not the least distant expectation, and restored her to a friend, by whom she had thought herself utterly for-

faken, and whom she had not herself scarce thought of for a long time.

Lady Loveit was now but just returned from the country, where she had continued ever since her marriage with Sir Bazil. — A famous French milliner being lately arrived from Paris, with abundance of curiosities, her ladyship went to see if there was any thing she should think worth the purchasing. — Mrs. Munden was led by the same curiosity, and it was at this woman's house, that these ladies happened to meet after so long an absence from each other.

Mrs. Munden was a little confused at first sight of her, as bringing to her mind some passages, which it was never in her power to think on with the indifference she wished to do. — They embraced however, with a great deal of affection, — made each other the usual compliments on the mutual change of their condition, for lady Loveit, by some accident, had heard of Mrs. Munden's marriage.

Though both these ladies were much more taken up with each other than with examining the trifles they came to see, yet neither of them would quit the shop
with

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without becoming customers : — lady Loveit perceiving that Mrs. Munden had neither coach nor chair at the door, after having asked what part of the town she lived in, and finding it was not too much out of her way, desired she would give her leave to set her down in her chariot.

Mrs. Munden readily accepted the offer, and being come to the door of her house, would have persuaded lady Loveit to alight, and come in, but she excused herself, and at the same time gave her a pressing invitation to her house as soon as an opportunity permitted. — ‘ I know, Madam,’ said she smiling, ‘ that it is my duty to pay the first visit to your ladyship, — yet as you are here, — I should not stand on that punctilio with you,’ interrupted lady Loveit, with the same good humour, ‘ but I expect company at home, and I know not but that they already wait for me.’ The other then told her, she would do herself the favour to attend her ladyship in a day or two : and this was all that passed at this first interview.

Mrs. Munden was extremely rejoiced at the opportunity of renewing her acquaintance with this lady, in which she had not the least room to doubt, but that she

should find what she so much wanted, a faithful adviser and an agreeable companion ; — they had always loved each other ; — there was a great parity of sentiment and principle between them, and as nothing but their different ways of thinking in point of conduct towards the men, had hindered them from being inseparable friends, that bar being removed by Mrs. Munden's change of temper, and her being now, what lady Loveit always was, no other remained to keep them from communicating their thoughts with the utmost freedom to each other.

The visit promised by Mrs. Munden, was not delayed beyond the time she mentioned ; lady Loveit received her without the least reserve, and they soon entered into conversation with the same sprightliness, as before the change of their conditions.

Mrs. Munden had resolved within herself, not to make the least mention of Mr. Truworth's name, but feeling, notwithstanding, a good deal of impatience to hear something of him, artfully entered into a discourse, which she knew must draw the other in to say something concerning him.

‘ I need

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‘ I need not ask,’ said she, ‘ how you
‘ liked the country ; it is pretty plain from
‘ your continuing there such a length of
‘ time, that you found more pleasures at
‘ Sir Basil’s seat, than any you had left be-
‘ hind.’ ‘ The house is well situated indeed’
replied lady Loveit, ‘ yet I have passed the
‘ least part of my time there, since I left
‘ London, — nor have we stayed away so
‘ long entirely through choice, but have
‘ in a manner been detained by a succes-
‘ sion of accidents altogether unforeseen.

‘ It took up six weeks,’ continued she,
‘ to receive the visits, which were every
‘ day crowded upon us, from all parts of
‘ the country : — this hurry being over
‘ we could do no less, than accompany
‘ Mr. Wellair and his lady, who had been
‘ with us all this while, to their house,
‘ where we stayed about a fortnight ; —
‘ after which, Sir Basil having promised
‘ my brother and sister Truworth, to
‘ pass some time with them in Oxford-
‘ shire, we crossed the country to that
‘ gentleman’s fine seat, where, as you may
‘ suppose, his arrival was welcomed in
‘ much the same manner Sir Basil’s had
‘ been in Staffordshire : — besides all his
‘ relations, intimate friends, tenants and
‘ dependants, I believe there was scarce
‘ a gentleman or lady, twenty miles round.

‘ who did not come to congratulate him
‘ on his marriage and return.

‘ For the reception of those guests,’
went she still on, ‘ the generous Mr. True-
‘ worth omitted nothing that might tes-
‘ tify his joy on the occasion of their
‘ coming ; — — feasting employed their
‘ days, and balls their nights : — — but
‘ alas ! in the midst of these variegated
‘ scenes of pleasure, death, — sudden death,
‘ snatched away the source of all our joys,
‘ and turned the face of gladness into the
‘ most poignant grief.

‘ Death, did your ladyship say !’ cried
Mrs. Munden, with an extraordinary emo-
tion, ‘ Is then Mr. Truworth dead ?’ ‘ No
‘ Madam,’ replied the other, wiping away
some tears, which the memory of this
fatal accident drew from her eyes, ‘ Mr,
‘ Truworth lives, and I hope will long
‘ do so, to be an honour to his country,
‘ and a comfort to all, who are so happy
‘ as to know him, — for certainly there
‘ never was a man more endued with
‘ qualities for universal good ; — — but
‘ it was his wife, — his amiable wife, that
‘ died.’

‘ His wife !’ cried Mrs. Munden, in-
terrupting her a second time, ‘ Is he al-
‘ ready

‘ ready a widower? ‘ Too soon, indeed, he
 ‘ became so,’ answered lady Loveit ;——
 ‘ scarce three months were elapsed from
 ‘ the day which made her a bride, to
 ‘ that which made her a lifeless corpse.—
 ‘ we were all together with some other
 ‘ company one evening in the tur-
 ‘ ret, which, by the help of some large
 ‘ telescopes Mr. Trueworth had placed
 ‘ there, commands the prospect of three
 ‘ counties at once, when my poor sister
 ‘ was seized suddenly ill ; —— as she was
 ‘ supposed to be pregnant, her complaint
 ‘ at first, was taken no other notice of,
 ‘ than to occasion some pleasantries, which
 ‘ new married women must expect to
 ‘ bear ; —— but she soon grew visibly
 ‘ worse, —— was obliged to be carried
 ‘ down stairs, and put directly into bed ;
 ‘ the next morning she discovered some
 ‘ symptoms of a fever, but it proved no
 ‘ more than the forerunner of the small-
 ‘ pox, of which distemper she died, be-
 ‘ fore her danger was apprehended, even
 ‘ by the physician.

‘ How I pity both the living and the
 ‘ dead,’ said Mrs. Munden, ‘ Mr. True-
 ‘ worth certainly could not support so
 ‘ great a loss, with any degree of mode-
 ‘ ration?’ —— ‘ The shock at first,’ replied
 lady Loveit ‘ was as much as all his
 I 4 ‘ phi-

' philosophy and strength of reason
 ' could enable him to combat with : —
 ' Sir Basil, though deeply affected for the
 ' loss of so amiable a sister, was obliged
 ' to conceal his own sorrows, the better
 ' to alleviate those he saw him in, and
 ' this kept us for two whole months at
 ' his house after the ceremony of the fu-
 ' neral was over. We had then prevailed
 ' on him to return with us to London ;
 ' every thing was prepared for our de-
 ' parture, when an unlucky accident hap-
 ' pened to myself, which detained us for
 ' yet a considerable time longer.

' We were diverting ourselves one day
 ' with angling,' continued she, ' when in
 ' endeavouring to cast my rod at too
 ' great a distance, I stooped so far over
 ' the bank, that I plunged all at once,
 ' head foremost, into the water : — the
 ' pond, it seems, was pretty deep, and I
 ' was in some danger ; — Sir Basil and
 ' Mr. Truworth seeing me fall, jumped
 ' in at the same instant, and by their as-
 ' sistance, I was brought safe to shore ; I
 ' was immediately carried into the house,
 ' stripped of my wet garments, and put in-
 ' to a warm bed, but the fright had so
 ' great an effect upon me, that it caused
 ' an abortion, which as I was then in the
 ' fifth month of my pregnancy, had like
 ' to

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‘ to have proved fatal to me — I was
‘ close prisoner to my chamber for several
‘ weeks, and on my being just
‘ able to leave it, was advised to have
‘ recourse, first to the Bristol, and then
‘ to the Bath waters, for the better establishment
‘ of my health : accordingly
‘ we went to both those places, stayed as
‘ long at each as I found needful for the
‘ purpose that brought me thither, and on
‘ my perfect recovery, Sir Bazil having
‘ some business at his estate, returned to
‘ Staffordshire ; — made a short excursion
‘ to Mrs. Wellair’s, and then we bowled
‘ up to London.

‘ This,’ added she, ‘ is the whole history
‘ of my eleven months absence ; — I
‘ should only have told you, that we had
‘ not Mr. Truworth’s company in our
‘ last ramble ; — one of the members for
‘ his county having vacated his seat by
‘ accepting an employment, Mr. Truworth
‘ was prevailed upon, by a great
‘ number of gentlemen and freeholders, to
‘ oppose his being rechosen, by setting up
‘ for a candidate himself ; — the election
‘ was to come on in a few days after our
‘ departure, and we have since heard that
‘ he succeeded in his attempt.’

Lady Loveit having finished her long narrative, and received the compliments of Mrs. Munden for the trouble she had given herself, was beginning to ask some questions concerning her own affairs, but some ladies coming in, broke off, for the present, all conversation on this head, and Mrs. Munden soon after took leave, tho' not without receiving an assurance from the other, of having her visit returned in a short time.



C H A P. XVI.

Presents the reader, among many other particulars, with a full though as concise, an account, as can be given of the real quality and condition of the lady, that Mrs. Munden had seen, and been so much charmed with at the mercer's.

MRS. Munden carried enough home with her from lady Loveit's, to employ her mind for that whole night at least: — what she had been told in relation to the death of Mrs. Trueworth, raised a strange contrariety of ideas in her, which it was impossible for her either to recon-

reconcile, or oblige either the one or the other totally to subside.

She thought it great pity, that so virtuous, so beautiful, and so accomplished a young lady, as she had been told Mrs. Truworth was, should thus early be snatched away from all the joys of love and life, but could not lament so melancholy an accident, in a manner she was sensible it deserved; — envy had ever been a stranger to her breast, yet since her own marriage, and that of Mr. Truworth, with his lady, she had sometimes been tempted to accuse heaven of partiality, in making so wide a difference in their fate: — and though the blame of her misfortunes lay wholly on herself, had been apt to imagine, that she had only been impelled by an unavoidable impulse, to act as she had done, and was fated by an invincible necessity, to be the enemy of her own happiness.

Thus did this fair predestinarian reason within herself, whenever the ill-usage of Mr. Munden made her reflect on the generosity of Mr. Truworth: — she repined not at the felicities she supposed were enjoyed by Mrs. Truworth, but regretted that her own lot had been cast so vastly different.

But though all these little heart-burnings now ceased, by the death of that so late happy lady, and even common humanity demanded the tribute of compassion for her destiny, of which none had a greater share, on other occasions, than Mrs. Munden, yet could she not on this pay it without some interruptions from a contrary emotion; — in these moments, if it may be said she grieved at all, it was more because she knew, that Mr. Truworth was grieved, than for the cause that made him so.

Her good sense, her justice, and her good nature, however, gave an immediate check to such sentiments, whenever she found them rising in her, but her utmost efforts could not wholly subdue them: — there was a secret something in her heart, which she would never allow herself to think she was possessed of, that in spite of all she could do, diffused an involuntary satisfaction at the knowledge, that Mr. Truworth was a widower.

If lady Loveit could have foreseen the commotions her discourse raised in the breast of her fair friend, she would certainly never have entertained her with it, but she so little expected her having
any

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any tenderness for Mr. Trueworth; that she observed not the changes in her countenance; when she mentioned that gentleman, as she afterwards frequently did, on many occasions, in the course of the visits to each other; — nor could Mrs. Munden, being ignorant herself of the real cause of the agitation she was in, make her Ladyship a confidant in this, as she did in all her other affairs, — the little happiness she enjoyed in marriage not excepted.

Lady Loveit had indeed a pretty right idea of her misfortune in this point, before she heard it from herself:—Sir Basil, tho' not at all conversant with Mr. Munden, was well acquainted with his character and manner of behaviour, and the account he gave of both to her on being told to whom he was married, left her no room to doubt how disagreeable a situation the wife of such a husband must be in: — she heartily commiserated her hard fate; — yet, as Lady Trusty had done, said every thing to persuade her to bear it with a becoming patience.

Perceiving she had lost some part of her vivacity, and would frequently fall into very melancholy musings, Sir Basil himself, now fully convinced of her merit,
and

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and good qualities, added his endeavours to those of his amiable consort for the exhilarating her spirits: —they would, needs have her make one in every party of pleasure, either formed by themselves, or wherein they had a share, and obliged her to come as often to their house as she could do without giving offence to her domestic tyrant.

An excess of gaiety when curbed, is apt to degenerate into its contrary extreme; it must therefore be confessed that few things could have been more lucky for Mrs. Munden than this event, — she had lost all relish for the conversation of the Miss Airishes, and those other giddy creatures, which had composed the greatest part of her acquaintance, and too much solitude might have brought on a gloominess of temper, equally uneasy to herself, and to those about her; but the society of these worthy friends, — the diversions they prepared for her, and the company to which they introduced her, kept up her native liveliness of mind, and at the same time convinced her, that pleasure was no enemy to virtue, or to reputation, when partook with persons of honour and discretion.

She had been with them one evening,
when

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when the satisfaction she took in their conversation, the pressures they made to detain her, joined to the knowledge, that there was no danger of Mr. Munden's being uneasy at her absence, he seldom coming home till towards day-break, engaged her to stay till the night was pretty far advanced; yet late as it was, she was presented with an adventure of as odd a kind, as ever she had been surprized with.

She was undressing, in order to go to bed, when she heard a very loud knocking at the street-door, after which her footman came up, and told her that a woman was below, who said she must speak with her immediately. — ‘I shall speak to nobody at this time of the night,’ said Mrs. Munden, ‘therefore go down and — and tell her so.’ — The fellow went, but returned in a moment or two, and told her, that the person would take no denial, nor would go out of the house without seeing her. — ‘Some very impudent creature, sure,’ — said Mrs. Munden, — ‘but do you go,’ added she in the same breath, to the maid that waited on her, ‘and ask her name and business, — if she will tell neither, let her be turned out of the house.’

She was in a good deal of perplexity,
to

to think who should enquire for her at that late hour, when the servant she had sent to examine into the matter, came back, and before she had well entered the chamber, cried out,—‘ Lord, madam, I never was
 ‘ so astonished in my life! I wonder
 ‘ Tom could speak in such a rude manner;—the woman, as he called her, is a
 ‘ very fine lady, I am sure, though she
 ‘ has no hoop, nor stays on, — nothing
 ‘ but a fine rich brocade wrapping gown
 ‘ upon her :—she looks as if she was just
 ‘ going to bed, or rather coming out of
 ‘ bed, for her head-cloaths are in great
 ‘ disorder, and her hair all about her
 ‘ ears.’

‘ Well, but her name and business,’ demanded Mrs. Munden hastily. Nay,
 ‘ madam,’ replied the maid, ‘ she will
 ‘ tell neither, but to yourself; so pray,
 ‘ dear madam, either come down stairs,
 ‘ or let her be brought up,—I am sure
 ‘ she does not look as if she would do you
 ‘ any hurt.

Mrs. Munden paused a little on what she had heard, and believing there must be something very extraordinary, indeed, both in the person, and the visit, resolved to be convinced of the truth, therefore, having given a strict charge, that both
 the

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the footmen should be ready at her call, in case there should be any occasion for them, went into the dining-room, and ordered that the person who enquired for her should be introduced.

Her whole appearance answered exactly to the description that had been given of her by the maid, but it was her face which most alarmed Mrs. Munden, as being positive she had seen it before, tho' when, or where, she could not at that instant recollect.

But the stranger soon eased her of the suspense she was in, when throwing herself at her feet, and bursting into a flood of tears, 'you once offered me your friendship, madam,' said she,—'a consciousness of my own unworthiness made me refuse that honour, but I now come to implore your compassion, and charitable protection.—I have no hope of safety, or of shelter, but in your goodness and generosity.'

The accents of her voice now discovered her to be no other, than the lady Mrs. Munden had seen at the mercer's:—she was strangely confounded, but not so much as to hinder her from raising the distressed fair one, with the greatest civility.

lity, and seating her in a chair, — ‘ Tho’
 ‘ I cannot comprehend, madam,’ answered she, ‘ by what accident you are reduced to address me in these terms, yet
 ‘ you may rely upon my readiness to assist the unfortunate, especially a person,
 ‘ whom I cannot but look upon as far
 ‘ from deserving to be so.’

‘ Oh, would to God,’ cried the other, very emphatically, ‘ that my history could
 ‘ preserve that kind of opinion in you;
 ‘ but, alas, though I find myself obliged
 ‘ to relate it to you, in order to obtain the
 ‘ protection I intreat, I tremble, lest by
 ‘ doing so, I should forfeit those pretensions to your mercy, which otherwise
 ‘ my sex, and my distress, might justly
 ‘ claim.

These words were sufficient to have excited the curiosity of a woman, who had less of that propensity in her nature than Mrs. Munden; — she told her, that by being made the confidante of her affairs, she should think herself obliged to excuse whatever she found not worthy of her approbation.

Prepare yourself then, madam, said her still weeping guest, — summon all your goodness to forgive the frailties of youth,
 and

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and inadvertency, and to pity the sad consequences which sometimes attend the pride of flattered beauty, and vain desire of ambition.

This expression sunk more deeply in the mind of Mrs. Munden than the person who uttered it imagined;—she made no reply, however, and the other began the narrative she had promised in these, or the like terms.

The History of Mademoiselle de Roquelair.

“ I NEED not tell you, madam,” said she, “ that I am not a native of this kingdom, my bad pronunciation of the language speaks it for me;—I am, indeed, by birth a Parisian, and daughter of the Sieur de Roquelair, a man of some estimation in the world.

“ The great hopes conceived of me in my infancy, encouraged him to be almost profuse in the expences of my education;—no accomplishment befitting of my sex and rank, was denied me;—in fine, it was easy to see he had an affection for me, above all his other children, and that the partial opinion he had of my person and understanding,

“ ing, made him build the highest expectations on my future fortune.

“ But, alas ! what he intended for my unhappiness proved my undoing ; — I had but just attained my fifteenth year of age, when the little beauty I was mistress of was taken notice of by the Duke de M——, as I was walking one evening in the Thuilleries, with a young companion of my own sex :—he passed us twice without speaking, but at the third turn accosted us with a gallantry natural to persons of his high rank ; the praises he bestowed on me were such as might excuse some vanity in a heart so young and unexperienced as mine then was.

“ On our leaving the walks, a gentleman of his retinue followed, and as I afterwards was informed, enquired who I was, and many other particulars concerning me ;—the next morning, being at mass in the church of St. Sulpice, I saw the Duke again, and on my coming out, had a letter put into my hands, which as soon as I got to a convenient place, I opened, and found it, as I before imagined, from the Duke.

“ After magnifying the power of my
“ wit

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“ wit, my beauty, my fine shape, and a
“ thousand charms, with which his amorous
“ fancy painted me, and protesting with
“ the most solemn imprecations words
“ could form, his everlasting adoration
“ of me, he intreated I would meet him,
“ at the same places where he had first
“ seen me, and appointed an hour in
“ which he knew least company would be
“ there.

“ I was imprudent enough to comply
“ with this request ;—my illustrious lover
“ was there before me, — he saluted me
“ with the utmost transport in his voice
“ and eyes, — led me to a retired part of
“ the walk, — made me the most splendid
“ offers, and endeavoured to persuade me,
“ that being his mistress was a station
“ more respectable, than being the wife
“ of a private gentleman, or even of a
“ little Marquis.

“ I was unprepared to confute the ar-
“ guments he urged, and to confess the
“ truth, felt but too much satisfaction in
“ hearing him speak ; — my tongue
“ obeyed the dictates of my heart, and
“ told him that I would be his, — though
“ I cannot say that I was tempted by any
“ extraordinary liking of his person, but
“ merely

“ merely by my ambition of pleasing a
 “ prince of the blood royal.

“ It was agreed between us, that a
 “ proper place should be provided for my
 “ reception, and I should quit my father’s
 “ house entirely, and this was to be ac-
 “ complished at the end of three days ;
 “ but, before the expiration of that time,
 “ a person, who had seen me in the
 “ Thuilleries, carried home intelligence
 “ with what company I had been, and
 “ my father, who preferred virtue above
 “ grandeur, took all imaginable precau-
 “ tions to prevent my continuing so dan-
 “ gerous an intercourse.

“ But what cannot, the power of gold
 “ effect ?—though I was lock’d up in my
 “ chamber,—no letters or messages per-
 “ mitted to be deliver’d to me, an agent
 “ of the Duke’s, by a large bribe, cor-
 “ rupted one of the servants, by whose as-
 “ sistance I got out of the house, when
 “ all the rest of the family were asleep,
 “ and a chariot waiting for me at the end
 “ of the street, carried me to a magnifi-
 “ cent hotel, where I found my noble
 “ lover, and every thing I could wish,
 “ ready to receive me.

“ Here I lived, for near two whole
 “ years,

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“ years, in a pomp which excited the
“ envy, and set me above the scandal of
“ the censorious ; — but at length malice
“ overtook me, — the baseness of those
“ about me accused me to my prince of
“ having wrong’d his bed ;—he too easily
“ gave credit to their aspersions, and not
“ only withdrew his affection and his fa-
“ vours from me, but cruelly discarded
“ me without the least provision for my
“ future support.

“ My father, who would never see me
“ in my exalted state, equally shunn’d me
“ in my fallen one ;—but at last, through
“ the intercession of some friends, he was
“ prevailed upon to forgive what was past,
“ provided I would leave Paris for ever,
“ and spend the remainder of my days in
“ a monastery :—to this, in the distracted
“ condition I then was, I yielded, and a
“ convent at Roan was made choice of
“ for my retreat ; — the abbess was wrote
“ to concerning me, and every thing was
“ prepared for my departure, when chance
“ brought me acquainted with Mr.
“ Thoughtless.

“ You start, madam,” continued she,
perceiving Mrs. Munden looked very
much confused, — “ but know at once,
“ that I am that very unfortunate woman
“ your

“ your brother brought with him from
 “ Paris,—who has ever since lived with
 “ him, and whom you must have heard
 “ of.”

The amazement Mrs. Munden was in, on finding her the mistress of her brother, was such, as would not permit her to make any other reply, than to desire she would go on with what she had farther to relate; on which Mademoiselle de Roquelair resumed her discourse in this manner :

“ This gentleman,” said she, “ was
 “ well acquainted with my story, but it
 “ did not hinder him from entertaining a
 “ passion for me ;—he declared it to
 “ me ; — the aversion I had to a recluse
 “ life, — the allurements of the world,
 “ and his more persuasive rhetoric, soon
 “ won me to yield to his desires : — I
 “ made a second elopement ;—we em-
 “ barked together, and came to England,
 “ where I have had the command of his
 “ family, and lived with him in all things
 “ like a wife, except the name.—But for-
 “ tune, always my enemy, conjured up a
 “ spirit of jealousy in him, for my torment
 “ at first, and at last for my utter ruin.
 “ — His fears of losing me, as he
 “ pretended, secluded me from all society;
 “ —denied me all the public diversions
 “ of

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“ of the town, and though I lived amidst
“ the very seat of pleasures, kept me as
“ much a stranger to them, as if I had
“ been a thousand leagues removed; —
“ but, oh! this night, this night, madam,
“ has compleated all his too suspicious
“ temper long since threatened. — The
“ poor mercer, at whose house you saw
“ me, came this night to bring a piece
“ of silk I had bespoke of him, — Mr.
“ Thoughtless came home immediately
“ after, and being told who was above
“ with me, flew up stairs, — burst open
“ the door, which by some accident was
“ locked, rushed in with his drawn sword,
“ swearing he would sacrifice us both; —
“ the man, to avoid his fury, jumped out
“ of the window into the yard; — Mr.
“ Thoughtless ran down the back stairs,
“ in order, I suppose, to make him in
“ that place the victim of his rage: —
“ whether he has effected it, I know not,
“ for trembling at my own danger, I
“ took that opportunity of running di-
“ rectly out of the house, though where
“ to go I knew not; — I had no friend,
“ — no acquaintance to whom I could
“ apply; — I found myself all alone in
“ the street, and exposed to insults,
“ even worse than those from which I
“ fled: — my good genius, for so I
“ hope it was, which in that dreadful
VOL. IV. K “ instant,

“ instant, reminded me of you ; — I had
 “ heard a high character of your good-
 “ ness, and was assured of it, even by the
 “ little I had seen of you, when you were
 “ pleased to think me worthy of your
 “ notice.”

“ This, madam,” added she, “ has
 “ brought me to you, and I once more
 “ beseech shelter and protection under
 “ your roof, for this night, at least, ’till
 “ I can recollect in what manner I can
 “ dispose of my wretched self.”

Though Mrs. Munden was apprehensive this lady had favoured herself too much in the recital she had made, yet she could not think of refusing what she asked :—she ordered a bed to be instantly prepared for her, and having conducted her to the chamber where she was to lie, told her, she would defer ’till the next morning any farther discourse on the subject they had been talking of, as it was very late, and she expected Mr. Munden home,—so wishing her a good repose, returned to her own apartment, to reflect at more leisure on this strange adventure.



CHAP. XVII.

Is less entertaining than some of the former.

THE husband of Mrs. Munden being engaged abroad 'till his usual hour, she had just time to get into bed before he came home, which she was very glad of, as it prevented him from asking any question concerning her sitting up so much beyond her custom; and she was not willing to say any thing to him of her new guest, 'till she had talked farther with her, and also examined into the truth of the affair, which brought her thither,

The more she reflected on the account that lady had given of herself, the less reason she found to give credit to some passages in it, — she could not think that a prince, such as the Duke De M—, would on a mere suggestion cast a woman out to misery and beggary, whom he had so passionately loved; — and yet less could she believe, that her brother, a man not fiery by nature, could have acted in the manner she had represented, without a much greater provocation than what she pretended.

Besides, the mercer bringing home goods so late at night to a customer, and being locked up with her, seemed so inconsistent with innocence, that she could not help being of opinion, that the cause must be bad indeed, which had no better plea for its defence.

It also afforded her a good deal of matter for vexation, that by expressing, in such warm terms, the great liking she took of this lady, when they accidentally met at the mercer's, she had encouraged her to make choice of her house for an asylum in her distress, and by this means rendered herself interested in the concerns of a stranger, who, at the best, it did not well become her to take part with.

But her most alarming apprehensions were in relation to her brother : — she knew not but if irritated to the high degree Mademoiselle de Roquelair had described, he might in reality have been guilty of some rash action, which might endanger his reputation and even his life.

Her mind being thus employed, it is easy to believe sleep had little power over her eyes ; — late as she went to bed, she rose pretty early in the morning, and impatient

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patient to know something farther of the transactions of the preceding night, she dispatched a servant to her brother's house under pretence of enquiring after his health, not doubting, but by the answer he would bring, she should be able to form some conjecture, whether any thing of the nature Mademoiselle de Roquelair seemed to apprehend, had really happened or not.

The man returning with intelligence, that Mr. Thoughtless was very well, and not yet stirring, gave her great consolation: — she then went up to the chamber of Mademoiselle, and after giving her the usual salutation of the morning, sat down by her bedside, and began to talk to her in this manner.

‘ Madam,’ said she, ‘ I have been considering on your story, and as I sincerely pity the misfortunes to which you have reduced yourself, should be glad to know, by what method you propose to extricate yourself from them, and what farther assistance you require from me, or is in my power to grant, without acting unbecoming of my character.’

‘ I should be utterly unworthy,’ answered

' answered the other weeping, ' of the compas-
 ' sion you have shewn, and even of the
 ' life you have preserved, should I entreat
 ' any thing of you, that might either in-
 ' jure your reputation, or prejudice the
 ' good understanding between you and
 ' your brother : — As to my misfortunes,
 ' they are, alas ! past remedy ; — I nei-
 ' ther hope, nor shall endeavour for a
 ' reconciliation with Mr. Thoughtless : —
 ' I have long since been ashamed, and
 ' weary of the errors of my conduct,
 ' though I wanted strength of resolution
 ' to reform them ; — but be assured,
 ' madam, I have now no other wish
 ' than to pass my future life in that only
 ' retreat for wretches like myself, — a
 ' monastery.'

Her streaming eyes, — her moving
 accent, and above all, the seeming con-
 trition she expressed for her faults, raised
 such a flow of tenderness in the soul of
 Mrs. Munden, that she resolved from that
 instant to do every thing in her power to
 save her.

' As the religion of your country,'
 said she, ' and in which you were bred,
 ' affords a great number of those safe
 ' and sure asylums for persons who have
 ' made an ill use of their liberty, you
 ' cannot,

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‘ cannot, indeed, do better than to fly
‘ to some one of them for refuge from
‘ temptations, which you have too much
‘ experienced the force of ; — and if you
‘ persevere in this good disposition, I will
‘ endeavour to procure the means of ren-
‘ dering you able to accomplish so laud-
‘ able a desire.

‘ ‘ Ah, madam,’ cried Mademoiselle de
‘ Roquelair, — ‘ it is all I ask of Heaven,
‘ or you, — the accidents of my life have
‘ convinced me, there can be no real
‘ happiness without virtue, and that the
‘ most certain defence of virtue is religion;
‘ — if I could now flatter myself with
‘ the means of being received within those
‘ sacred walls, from which the fatal love
‘ of Mr. Thoughtless drew me, I should
‘ think my guardian angel had not quite
‘ forsook me.’

On this, the good-natured believing
Mrs. Munden said many kind things to
her, — made her take some refreshment,
as she lay in bed, in which she advised her
to continue some time, and endeavour to
compose herself to sleep, she seeming to
stand in need of it very much.—In going
out of the chamber, she told her she
would return in a few hours; but if she
wanted any thing in the mean time, or

her ringing a bell by her bedside, a maid servant would immediately attend upon her.

She was, indeed, bent to try all possible methods for the accomplishment of what she promised; — ‘How guilty soever this unhappy woman is,’ said she within herself, — ‘my brother in common justice, ought at least to leave her in the same condition in which he found her, — she was then going to a nunnery, and it is now his duty to send her to one; for it cannot be expected her father will make a second offer of that sort.’

With these reflections, together with others on the manner in which it would be most proper to address Mr. Thoughtless on this score, was her mind taken up, till the hour she imagined he might be stirring; — the disturbances, which must necessarily have happened in his family the night before, made her suppose he might lie longer than usual; but she chose rather to wait a while for his rising, than hazard losing the opportunity of speaking to him, by his being gone abroad.

That gentleman had, in fact, passed the most disagreeable night he had ever known: — he had loved Mademoiselle de
Ro-

Roquelair with such an extravagance of fondness, that he had sometimes been even prompted by it to marry her ; but the too great warmth of her constitution, and the known inconstancy of her temper, as often deterred him from it, and also made him restrain her from many of those liberties he would otherwise have allowed her : — he had thought himself no less secure of her person, than she always pretended he was of her heart, — and now to find all his tenderness for her abused, all his precautions frustrated, might well raise in him passions of the most desperate kind.

The inclinations of this woman were, in reality, too vicious to be bound by any obligations, or withheld from their gratifications, by any of the methods taken for that purpose : — she loved variety, — she longed for change, without consulting whether the object was suitable or not ; — the mercer had a person and address agreeable enough ; — he was of an amorous complexion, and readily improved the advances she made him : — he frequently came to her under the pretence of bringing patterns of silks, or other things in his way of trade ; — and all this, as she imagined, without raising any suspicion in the family ; — no interruption

happening in their repeated interviews, she sometimes kept him with her 'till near the hour in which Mr. Thoughtless usually came home, which was seldom 'till one or two o'clock.

But on this unlucky night it so fell out, that a very ill run of play, and the loss of all the money he had about him, brought him home much sooner than was his custom; — a servant being at the door, prevented his knocking, so that the lovers had not the least notice how near he was to them. — He went directly into his dressing-room, which was backwards on the ground floor, and sat musing for some time, — casting up the sums he had lost, — cursing fortune within himself, and protesting never to touch a card, or throw a dice again, when on a sudden he was alarmed with the sound of a man's voice laughing very heartily; — he stamp'd with his foot, and a servant immediately coming up, — ‘Is there any company ‘above?’ demanded he hastily: — ‘None, ‘sir, but the mercer that comes to make ‘dam with silks,’ replied the man, — ‘A ‘mercenary at this time of night,’ cried Mr. Thoughtless, — ‘how long has he been ‘here? — ‘I cannot tell, exactly, sir,’ said he, ‘but I believe, three or four ‘hours.’ — ‘A long visit, and on business

‘finess too!’ resumed Mr. Thoughtless. and after a little pause, — ‘Go,’ continued he, ‘bid Mademoiselle de Roquelair come down to me.’

If this unfaithful woman had been but mistress of artifice enough to have made any one of the family her friend, she would certainly have been told, that Mr. Thoughtless was come home, and her gallant might easily have slipped out of the house, without his knowledge; — but on the contrary, her imperious behaviour towards them, set them all in general against her: — this fellow in particular, whom she had used worse than the rest, rejoiced that his master was likely to find out what he wished him to know, but never durst acquaint him with.

On his going up stairs, he found they were shut in the bed-chamber, and running to his master with this account, — ‘Locked in the chamber,’ said Mr. Thoughtless, starting up! — ‘Yes, sir,’ answered the servant, ‘and nobody would answer, though.’ ‘I knocked two or three times;’ — which ‘by the way, if he did at all, it was too softly for them to hear.

‘Confusion!’ cried Mr. Thoughtless, now worked up to the highest pitch of

jealous rage, ‘I’ll try if they will open ‘to me.’—With these words he drew his sword, and flew up stairs, burst open the door, and rushed into the room with all the fury of an incensed lion.—The astonished guilty pair had neither thought nor means to escape;—the lover, on the first burst of the door, jumped out of the window into the yard;—Mademoiselle ran screaming to one corner of the room,—‘Abandoned woman,’ cried Mr. Thoughtless, ‘your punishment shall be ‘the second course,’—then, followed by his man with lights, ran in pursuit of the person who had injured him.

This unhappy woman not daring to stand the tempest of his rage, when he should return, took the opportunity of his having quitted the chamber, to make her escape,—though at the time she did so, as she had truly told Mrs. Munden, she neither knew where, nor to whom she should apply for refuge.

The mercer, in the mean time, was found by Mr. Thoughtless, but in a condition more exciting pity than revenge; the poor man had broke both his legs with his fall, and was otherwise very much hurt, but on seeing on whom, and in what manner he was approached, the
terror

terror of immediate death made him exert all the strength that was left in him, to cry out for pardon; which word he repeated over and over in the most lamentable tone that could be; — Mr. Thoughtless, on this, turned hastily away, bidding his servants raise and carry him into the hall, where a chair being presently brought, he was put into it, and sent home to make the best excuse he could to his wife for the mischief that had happened to him.

Every room was afterwards searched for Mademoiselle de Roquelair, but she not being found, and a maid-servant remembering, that in the midst of the confusion the street-door had been left open, the flight of that lady was not to be doubted.

Though these disturbances had taken up the greatest part of the night, Mr. Thoughtless was able to enjoy little repose after going to bed, and rose rather sooner than usual; — he was up and dressed, when his sister came, but was a good deal surprized to be told of her being there, as she had never visited him before without a formal invitation.

‘Good morrow, my dear sister,’ said
he,

he, as soon as she was introduced, ‘this
 ‘is a favour quite unexpected; — pray
 ‘what brings you abroad thus early?’ —
 ‘You men,’ answered she, ‘who keep
 ‘such late hours, may well think it early;
 ‘but for us women, who live more re-
 ‘gularly, it is no wonder to see us
 ‘breathe the morning air: — but I as-
 ‘sure you, I rose somewhat sooner than
 ‘ordinary to-day on your account;’ —
 ‘On mine! — as how pray?’ demanded
 he. ‘I am come answered she, to soli-
 ‘cit in behalf of a person who has fallen
 ‘under your displeasure, — Mademoiselle
 ‘de Roquelair.’

‘Mademoiselle de Roquelair!’ cried
 ‘he, hastily interrupting her, ‘what
 ‘knowledge have you of that infamous
 ‘creature?’ — she then ingenuously related
 ‘to him, how they had met by accident
 ‘at the mercer’s, — the offer she had
 ‘then made of her friendship, and how,
 ‘as she supposed, emboldened by that
 ‘mistaken encouragement, she had flown
 ‘to her house for shelter the preceding
 ‘night: — ‘You see how dangerous it is,’
 said he, ‘to make friendship at first
 ‘sight; but surely the wretch cannot flat-
 ‘ter herself with the least distant hope of
 ‘a reconciliation?’

‘Far

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‘Far be it from me, sir, replied Mrs. Munden very gravely, ‘to become the negociator of such a treaty, or even to attempt a vindication of her behaviour, — no, it is your own honour, for which alone I am concerned, and that I think requires you should send her to a monastery, since, as she says, you deprived her of the opportunity of entering into one.’

‘All mere pretence,’ cried he ; — ‘tis true there was some talk of such a thing, but she has inclinations of a different sort.’ — To which Mrs. Munden replied, ‘that inclinations, though never so corrupt, might be reformed by reason, adversity and experience ; — that she hoped her penitence was sincere, and what before was her aversion, was now become her choice.’ — She then urged the request she came upon in terms so moving and pathetic, that Mr. Thoughtless, irritated as he was, could not withstand the energy of her words : — he told her he would consider on what she had said, and give his answer the next day ; but in the mean time, desired, she would advise her unworthy guest to send for her baggage immediately, saying,

ing, he would have nothing in his house that should remind him of her.

Mrs. Munden pretty well satisfied with having obtained thus much, took her leave, and returned to Mademoiselle de Roquelair, with an account of what she had done.



C H A P. XVIII.

Contains a most shocking instance of infidelity and ingratitude.

MAdemoiselle de Roquelair, on finding how far the good nature of Mrs. Munden had made her interest herself in her behalf, expressed the transports of her gratitude in terms which gave some pain to the modesty of that lady to receive : — ‘ What I have done, said she, is ‘ to promote the cause of virtue, and I ‘ hope my endeavours that way, will not ‘ be lost on your account,’ — ‘ You are ‘ all goodness, replied the other, ‘ but I ‘ blush to think, that being already indebted for so many favours, I must still
become

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‘ become your petitioner for more ; ——
‘ though I have lived fifteen months in
‘ this town, I am a perfect stranger to
‘ the greatest part of it, —— quite un-
‘ acquainted with its customs, and know
‘ not where, and in what manner to address
‘ myself for lodgings : —— in the
‘ midst of my distractions, I found shelter
‘ under your hospitable roof ; —— may
‘ I presume to flatter myself with the
‘ continuance of that charitable protection,
‘ ’till I receive an answer from Mr.
‘ Thoughtless ?’

Mrs. Munden paused a little at this request ; but thinking it would be cruel in this distress to have recourse to strangers, and to whom she could communicate nothing of her mind, made this reply : — ‘ Though it would be highly inconvenient, Madam,’ said she, ‘ for you to remain in my house for any length of time, yet as, in all probability, your affairs will be determined in a few days, I would not have you think of leaving me, ’till you are prepared to leave the kingdom ; — please therefore,’ continued she, ‘ to make an inventory of what things you have at my brother’s, and I will give orders for their being brought directly hither.’

Mademoiselle

Mademoiselle de Roquelair was beginning to give some fresh testimonies of the sense she had of this last obligation, but Mrs Munden would not suffer her to proceed, and pointing to a standish that stood on the table, desired her to write the memorandums she had mentioned; — ‘Obedience, madam, is better than sacrifice,’ said the other. and immediately did as she was directed; — after which Mrs. Munden went down to give the orders she had promised.

She sent this inventory by her own man, and instructed him to procure persons for bringing thither every thing belonging to Mademoiselle de Roquelair; but as this could not be done, and that lady dress’d before the hour of dining, which was just at hand, she judged it improper she should appear at table, ’till she could do so with greater decency; — she therefore bid one of the maids prepare something apart, and serve it up to her in her own chamber,

She then began to consider what she should say to Mr. Munden in relation to this affair; — she knew not but he might already be apprized of what had passed, or if even he were not so, she thought it would

would be impossible to keep her in the house without his privity, — so resolved to be quite open in the affair.

She was right in her conjecture, — Mademoiselle de Roquelair had happened to ring the bell for something she wanted ; — Mr. Munden hearing it, and knowing his wife was abroad, asked who was above, and this question occasioned the man, who was then dressing him, to give an account, as far as was in his power to do, of the last night's accident.

This a little surprised him, yet not enough to keep him from the Park, where he constantly walked every day an hour or two before dinner ; but on his return, he immediately interrogated his wife, concerning her new guest : on which she told him, without the least reserve, every circumstance of this transaction : — he listened attentively to what she said, but testified neither any dislike, or approbation of her conduct in this respect : — he said no more to her after she had done speaking, but behaved with the same sullen silence he had always done since her adventure with Lord ****, and as soon as dinner was over, went out to pass the remainder of the day, and best part of the night, according to custom.

Mrs.

Mrs. Munden's good-nature would not suffer her to go abroad the whole afternoon, — she passed all the hours 'till bedtime, with Mademoiselle de Roquelair, and did every thing in her power, both to comfort her in the affliction she was under, and to fortify her in the good resolution she seemed to have taken: — the next morning she received, as she expected, the following billet from her brother.

To Mrs. MUNDEN.

“ Dear Sister,

“ IN compliance with your desires,
 “ and to be certain of getting eternally
 “ rid of the sight of a woman who has
 “ so much abused the kindness I had for
 “ her, I consent to grant her request of
 “ being enabled to go into a monastery:
 “ a friend of mine has great dealings with
 “ a merchant at Boulogne, — I will see
 “ him this afternoon, and pay into his
 “ hands the sum which I am told is sufficient
 “ for that purpose: — if you give
 “ yourself the trouble to call on me to-morrow
 “ morning, I will give you his order
 “ for her receiving it on her arrival. —
 “ I cannot think of entering
 “ your

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“ your house, while she is in it, but am
“ always,

“ Dear sister,

“ Your affectionate brother,

“ T. THOUGHTLESS.

Mrs. Munden having imparted the contents of this letter to Mademoiselle de Roquelair, she seemed as much content, as a person in her circumstances could be; she dined below that day, and Mr. Munden treated her with the same politeness and complaisance he always used towards persons, over whom he had no power.

The next morning did not fail of carrying his fair wife to her brother's, about the hour in which she imagined he would expect her, but on the moment of her entrance, she had the mortification of being accosted by him in these terms: ‘ My dear sister, said he, ‘ I was just going to send to you, to prevent your giving yourself this needless trouble. — ‘ The gentleman I went to is out of town, and will not return these two days: so nothing can be done in this woman's affair ’till he comes back.’ — She told him she was extremely sorry, ‘ because,
said

said she, 'delays are sometimes dangerous; but I hope, my dear brother, no second considerations will make you frustrate the good intentions of this unhappy penitent.' — 'No, no,' cried he, 'I wish she may persevere in them, as stedfastly as I shall to the promise I have made.' Satisfied with this assurance, she took her leave, little suspecting, while she was labouring with all her might in this good office, that cruel and ungenerous return, which was about to be made for her compassion.

Mr. Munden had seen Mademoiselle de Roquelair no more than once, but that once was sufficient to make him become enamoured; --- her beauty fired him, --- the known wantonness of her inclinations encouraged him, — he scarce doubted of success, but in case of a failure, and if she should even acquaint his wife with his attempt, her character furnished him with the pretence of having made it only to try how far her conversion was sincere.

He therefore hesitated not a moment if he should endeavour the accomplishment of his desires, and for the doing so, no time was to be lost, as she was so suddenly to depart. Mrs. Munden was no sooner gone out, than he went softly up

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up stairs to the chamber of this too lovely and less more virtuous stranger; she was sitting in a pensive posture, leaning her head upon her hand, when he came in, but rose to receive him with that respect, which she thought due from her to the husband of her protectress.

After the salutations of the morning were over, 'Is it possible,' cried he, taking one of her hands, and looking earnestly on her face, 'that such youth, such beauty, charms in such profusion, should be condemned to a cloyster! --- no, it can never be, --- all the powers of love and pleasure, forbid you to make so unnatural a choice.' --- Transported and amazed at hearing him speak in this manner, she could not forbear telling him with her eyes, that her thoughts corresponded with his words, but willing her tongue should preserve the decency of the character she had assumed, at least 'till he should make a farther declaration of his sentiments: --- 'If I were, indeed,' answered she, 'all that can be described of beautiful, I could not sure be an offering too amiable for heaven.'

'Heaven never gave you these perfections,' resumed he, 'to be concealed in a dark lonesome cell: ---- those melt-
ing

‘ing lips of yours were never formed to
 ‘kiss the feet of a cold lifeless image, or
 ‘pour forth oraisons to unhearing saints,
 ‘but to make blest some warm, — some
 ‘happy he, who knows, and has the
 ‘power of returning the raptures they
 ‘bestow.’—These last words were attended
 with such vehement and repeated pres-
 ‘sures of the lips he praised, as left her
 no room to doubt the aim of his desires,
 as did the manner of receiving them also
 convince him of his success.

‘But are you in earnest resolved to be a
 ‘nun?’ replied he: ‘Since fate will have
 ‘it so,’ replied she, with a deep sigh, and
 a look so languishing, and so sweet, as
 pierced his very soul: — ‘Make me your
 ‘fate then,’ cried he impatiently, ———
 ‘be mine, and not all the saints in the ka-
 ‘lender shall snatch you from me;’ ———
 ‘You are then, you must be my fate,’
 ‘said she, ‘returning his embrace with
 ‘equal eagerness,’ — ‘you have the power
 ‘of fate, and are no less resistless, —
 ‘henceforth I’ll seek no other heaven but
 ‘your love, your breast my altar, and
 ‘your arms my cell.

It will be easily supposed, that after
 this, she refused no liberties he thought
 fit to take: — nothing but the last fa-
 vour

your was wanting to complete his wishes, and to that he would not venture to proceed, for fear of an interruption, but they agreed to meet at the Portuguese ambassador's chapel at six o'clock that same evening. Mutual kisses and embraces having sealed the covenant, he went down to dress, and left her to compose her countenance against Mrs. Munden's return.

This very wicked woman, who had never any real thoughts of going into a monastery, and only intended to appropriate the money she expected from Mr. Thoughtless, to such uses as might induce some man of fortune to make choice of her for a mistress, now gave herself little pain, whether he granted her request or not, imagining she had found in Mr. Munden all she wished for, or could hope in a gallant.

She affected, however, to Mrs. Munden, to be under some concern for this delay of her intended journey, but said, she would employ the time she staid, in such acts of devotion, as should best prepare her to become a member of that sacred society, which she soon hoped to be among: 'I have not been,' added she, 'for a long time at confession, but I

‘ will go this afternoon, and ease my
‘ conscience of its load of guilt..

Thus impiously did she profane the name of religion, by making it the veil to cover the most shameful depravities of nature. — On the arrival of the appointed hour, with looks of sanctity, and a heart full of impurity, she hastened to the place of rendezvous ; the punctual Mr. Munden waited for her at the chapel door, and conducted her where they had all the freedom they could wish of indulging their vicious inclinations.

They broke off this first amorous intercourse much sooner than either of them desired ; Mademoiselle de Roquelair not being able to find a plausible excuse to make to Mrs. Munden for staying beyond the time, which her pretended devotions might be reasonably supposed to take up ; but to atone for this misfortune, a stratagem was contrived between them, not only for their meeting next day, but also for their continuing together a much longer time,—it was thus -

She told Mrs. Munden, that the reverend father, to whom she had confessed, informed her, that a young lady of a very worthy family in England, having passed her

her year of probation at a monastery at Bologne, and returned hither only to take an eternal leave of her friends, and of the world, was now just ready to go back, in order to be initiated ; — ‘ To this family,’ added she, ‘ the good father has offered to introduce me to-morrow, and if the young lady approves of my being the companion of her voyage, as he assures me she certainly will, how happy shall I think myself.’

The truth of all this not being suspected by Mrs. Munden, she congratulated her upon it ; it is easy to deceive the innocent, — but it must be owned, this wicked woman had subtlety enough to have imposed on a person more skilled in the artifices of the world, than was the amiable lady on whom she practised it.

But not to detain the reader’s attention on so ungrateful a subject, I shall only say, that one assignation was still productive of another, and the credulity of the injured wife served only as a matter of mirth to the transgressing husband, and his guilty partner.

But now the time was come when these subterfuges must necessarily be at an end,

or become too gross not to be seen thro'. Mr. Thoughtless had seen his friend, — had paid the money into his hands, and received a bill from him on the merchant at Bologne; when he delivered it to Mrs. Munden, — ‘ Sister,’ said he, ‘ this paper will entitle your guest to the receipt of three hundred louis-d’ors, on her arrival at Bologne, but I expect you will oblige her to depart immediately, for it is neither consistent with your reputation to keep her in your house, nor with my peace of mind, that she should continue in the kingdom.’ To which she replied with a smile, ‘ That there was nothing more certain than that his commands in this point would be punctually obeyed.’

This lady was rejoiced at having accomplished what she thought so good a work; but having perceived in Mademoiselle de Roquelair some abatement of her first eagerness for a religious life, she thought proper on giving her the bill to repeat to her the words her brother had said on that account; to which the other coolly answered, ‘ Your brother, Madam, need be under no apprehensions of my offending him in this point, or giving you any farther trouble.’

This

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This, though no more than what the lovers expected, was yet a dreadful shock to them both : great part of the time they were together that evening, was taken up in talking of it, Mademoiselle de Roquelair protested, that death was less cruel than being torn from her dear Munden thus early, — thus in the infancy of their happiness ; and gave some hints, that she wished he would hire private lodgings for her ; but she knew little of the temper of the man she had to deal with : — he loved her as a mistress, but hated the expence of keeping her as a mistress, he therefore evaded all discourse on that head, and told her that he fancied that by pretences, such as already had been made, she might still continue in the house, — ‘ means at least,’ said he, ‘ may be found out to protract our mutual misfortune, and give us more time to consider what we have to do.’

She agreed, however, to make the experiment, and poor Mrs. Munden was imposed upon by some new invention from one day to another, for upwards of a week, but at last beginning to fear there was something more at the bottom of these delays than was pretended, and her brother having sent twice in that time, to

know if his desires had been complied with, she resolved at once to put a period to inconveniencies, which she thought she could so easily get rid of.

Mademoiselle de Roquelair having stayed abroad extremely late one night, she took the opportunity of her having done so, of speaking more plainly to her than her good-nature and complaisance had hitherto permitted her to do; — she went up to her chamber next morning, and with an air which had something of severity in it, — ‘ You keep odd hours, madam,’ said she, ‘ for a person who affects to be so great a penitent; but I suppose you are now prepared to ease me of all concern on your account: — ‘ I shall trouble you no longer,’ cried the other, ‘ ’till the young lady I told you of is ready to depart.’ — ‘ You will do well,’ resumed Mrs. Munden, ‘ to remain with her till she is so, for, madam, I must insist on your removal hence this day.’ — ‘ You will not turn me out of doors?’ cried Mademoiselle de Roquelair. — ‘ I hope you will not oblige me to an act, so contrary to my nature,’ replied Mrs. Munden. — ‘ Say rather contrary to your power’ returned that audacious woman, and coming up to her with the most unparalleled assurance,

assurance, ‘ This house, which you forbid me,’ pursued she, ‘ I think Mr. Munden is the master of, and I shall therefore continue in it ’till my convenience calls me from it, or he shall tell me I am no longer welcome.’

Impossible is it to describe, and difficult even to conceive Mrs. Munden’s astonishment at these words : — to hear a woman thus doubly loaded with guilt and obligations,—a woman, who but a few days past had been prostrate at her feet, imploring pity and protection, now all at once ungratefully contemning the benefits she had received, and insolently defying the authority to which she had flown for shelter ; — all this must certainly give a shock almost beyond the strength of human reason to sustain. — ‘ Mr. Munden, cried the injured fair one, with a voice hardly intelligible, ‘ Mr. Munden !’ she could utter no more, but flew down stairs with such rapidity that her feet scarce touched the steps.

Mr. Munden was not quite ready to go out, — she found him in his dressing-room, and throwing herself into a chair, half suffocated with passion, related to him, as well as she was able, the manner

in which she had been treated ; to which he replied, with a good deal of peevishness, ‘ Prithee do not trouble me with these idle stories, Mademoiselle de Roquelair is your guest, — I have no concern in your little quarrels.” —— ‘ I hope, said she, ‘ you will do me that justice which every wife has a right to expect, and convince the French hypocrite, that I am too much the mistress of this house for any one to remain in it without my permission.’ —— ‘ So you would make me the dupe of your resentment,’ resumed he scornfully, ‘ but positively I shall not do a rude thing to oblige you, or any body else.’ —— In speaking these words, having now adjusted his dress, he flung out of the room without giving her time to add any thing farther on a subject he was wholly unprepared to answer.

What perplexing whirl of wild imaginations must such a behaviour from a husband excite in a wife, conscious of having done nothing to provoke it : —— happy was it for her that love had the least share in her resentment ; — all her indifference could not enable her to support, with any degree of patience, so palpable a contempt ; — she returned directly

rectly to her own chamber, where shutting herself up, she gave a loose to agitations too violent for words to represent.



CHAP. XIX.

Relates such things as the reader will doubtless think of very great importance, yet will hereafter be found of much greater than he can at present imagine..

AFTER this much-injured wife had vented some part of the overflowing passions of her soul in tears and exclamations, she began to consider with more calmness, in what manner she ought to behave in so amazing a circumstance. —She had not the least propensity in her nature to jealousy, yet she could not think that any thing less than a criminal correspondence between her husband and this French woman, could induce the one, or embolden the other, to act as they had done towards her.

‘Neither divine, nor human laws,’ said she, ‘nor any of those obligations by which I have hitherto looked upon myself as bound, can now compel me any longer to endure the cold neglects, the insults, the tyranny of this most ungrateful—most perfidious man’——I have discharged the duties of my station; I have fully proved I know how to be a good wife, if he had known how to be a even a tolerable husband: wherefore then should I hesitate to take the opportunity, which this last act of baseness gives me, of easing myself of that heavy yoke I have laboured under for so many cruel months.’

She would not, however do any thing precipitately; it was not sufficient she thought that she should be justified to herself; she was willing also to be justified in the opinion of her friends: her brother was the first person to be consulted, she resolved therefore to go immediately to him, but as it was necessary to put some things in order before her departure, in case she should return no more, she called the maid, who always waited on her in her chamber, to assist her on this occasion.

She

She locked up her jewels, and what other trinkets she had of value in an amber cabinet, and made her wearing apparel be also disposed of in proper utensils, leaving out only some linnen, and other necessaries for the present use, which she also caused to be packed up.—The poor maid, who loved her mistress dearly, and easily guessed the meaning of these preparations, could not refrain weeping all the time she was thus employed ;— ‘ Ah, ‘ Madam,’ cried she, ‘ what a sad thing ‘ it is that married gentlemen will be so ‘ foolish ! — hang all the French, I say.’ ‘ — What do’st mean, Jenny,’ said Mrs. Munden ? — ‘ Ah, Madam,’ replied she, ‘ I should have told you before, but that ‘ I was afraid of making you uneasy ; ‘ but since I find you know how things ‘ are, I shall make no secret of it : — ‘ you may remember, Madam, that you ‘ gave me leave last Monday to go to ‘ see my sister, — she lives in St. Martin’s lane, — it would have been nearer ‘ for me, indeed, to have gone through ‘ the Mews, but I know not how it ‘ happened, I went by Charing-Cross, ‘ and just as I was going to cross the ‘ way, who should I see pop out of a ‘ hackney coach, but my master and this ‘ French woman ; — they hurried toge-

‘ther, arm in arm, into a bagnio, — and
 ‘you know, madam, some of those places
 ‘have but an ugly name; — for my
 ‘part I was so confounded, that I scarce
 ‘knew whether I stood upon my head,
 ‘or my heels; but I did not say a word
 ‘of what I had seen when I came home,
 ‘’till just now John came down and told
 ‘us all how that wicked woman had
 ‘affronted you.’

Mrs. Munden then recollected, that
 Mr. Munden’s man was in the room,
 when she related the behaviour of made-
 moiselle de Roquelair, which she now was
 not sorry for, nor of the fresh proof given
 her by this maid of the perfidy of her
 husband.

‘Well, Jenny,’ said she, ‘I am not
 ‘yet determined how I shall proceed; —
 ‘I am going to my brother’s, and shall
 ‘take Tom with me, — if I do not come
 ‘back to night, he shall bring you in-
 ‘structions what things to send me; ---
 ‘but in the mean time, say nothing to
 ‘your master of what we have been talk-
 ‘ing.

Mrs. Munden could not forbear shed-
 ding tears as she was going into her chair,
 at the thoughts of this exile, voluntary

as it was from a house she had so much right to call her own; but the poor maid roar'd out so loud at seeing her depart, that it brought all the servants out of the kitchen to know what was the matter, which being told by Jenny, occasioned so general a grief among them, for the loss of so good a mistress, that had Mademoiselle de Roquelair remained in the house, and the same servants also been continued, it is possible she would have had little either of respect, or obedience from them.

But fortune spared this mortification, in order to inflict a much greater one on her ingratitude and treachery. — Mr. Munden had not quitted the presence of his wife many minutes before he began to reflect seriously on this accident; — he found it might prove a very vexatious one if the consequences it seemed to threaten were not in time prevented: — he highly blamed Mademoiselle de Roquelair for her behaviour to Mrs. Munden, not so much because it might give that lady room to suspect in what manner he had wronged her, as because it plainly shewed, that she other intended to pin herself upon him, and oblige him to support her; a thing which did not at all suit with her humour: — he had gratified his passion almost to a surfeit, — a very little longer
time

time would have made him heartily wish to get rid of her, as he had ever done to gain her; and although it could not be said he was as yet altogether cloyed with the pleasures she so lavishly bestowed, yet a little examination into the extent of his inclinations, convinced him, that he could bear the loss of her for ever without pain.

While the blood runs high, and desire is rampant for possession, prudence is of little force; but when the one begins to flag, the other resumes its empire over the mind, and never rests 'till it finds means to retrieve what it has lost:—he could now consider, that the money remitted to Bologne by Mr. Thoughtless, could be received by nobody but Mademoiselle de Roquelair herself, and that it was probable, that gentleman, if told the usage had been given to his sister, might be provoked to recal his order, and prevent the payment of it at all; — this seem'd, however, a plausible pretence for persuading her to go away directly, and also for making a merit to his wife of what he did.

Having fully determined within himself how to proceed in this affair, he shortened his morning's walk, and came home some
hours

hours before the usual time : — he was at first a little fretted on being told Mrs. Munden was gone to her brother's, not doubting but the errand on which she went, was to complain of the treatment she had received ; but Jenny carefully concealing what her mistress had said to her, concerning her intentions of coming back no more, he passed it lightly over, imagining her accusations and reproaches would cease, the object of them being once removed.

He found no difficulty in prevailing on Mademoiselle de Roquelair to go to Bologne. — Three hundred louis d'ors was too tempting a sum to be forfeited merely for the want of a little jaunt, especially as she consider'd, that she might accomplish her business there, and return to London within the compass of a very few days, and he told her, that he would hire lodgings for her against her coming back.

‘ Well then, my angel,’ said he, ‘ no time is to be lost ; — as this is not post day, if you set out immediately for Dover, you may be at Bologne, and have received the money before any letter can reach that place to prevent it, for it is very likely that the spite my
 wife

' wife has towards you, may work upon
' the resentment of her brother to at-
' tempt such a thing.'—Every thing being
concluded upon for this expedition, he
went himself to procure a post-chaise, ap-
pointing her to meet him at a place he
mentioned to her in an hour at farthest.

As he had promised to send all her bag-
gage to the lodgings which he should
provide for her reception, she had nothing
to do but to pack up some few necessaries
to take with her. — This little work
being soon over, a hackney coach car-
ried her to the house that had been
agreed upon, where she saw a post-chaise
already at the door, and the diligent
Mr. Munden waiting for her coming :—
as she proposed to reach Canterbury that
same night, and it was then past two
o'clock, the lovers were obliged to take a
very hasty leave.

This double deceitful man having a
farther view in what he did than they had
any notion of, told her at parting, that
it would be proper for her to stay at
Bologne 'till she received a letter from him
with an account in what street, and part
of the town the lodgings he should pro-
vide for her were situated, to the end she
might

MISS BETSY THOUGHTLESS. 233

might come directly into them on her arrival ;—he spoke this with an air so full of tenderness and care for her repose, that she had not the least suspicion of his drift, and replied, that she would not fail to do as he advised, but desired he would be as speedy as possible in writing to her ;——‘ for,’ cried she, embracing him, ‘ I shall think every day a ‘ year ’till I return to the arms of my dear ‘ Munden.’

Having thus in reality discarded his mistress, though without her knowing he had done so, he went home, in order to boast to his wife of the complaisance he had shewn to her in this affair, but finding she was not yet come back, he called for her maid, and bid her tell her the moment she should return, that he had complied with her request, and made the French woman go out of the house.

After having said this, he went out again, and came not home ’till late at night, when he was confounded beyond measure on finding a letter from Mrs. Munden, which had been left for him by her own footman in the beginning of the evening, and contained these lines :

To

To Mr. MUNDEN.

‘ S I R,

‘ A S you cannot but be sensible, that
 ‘ the mutual engagements between us
 ‘ have been strictly adhered to on my
 ‘ part, and almost in every particular fal-
 ‘ sified on yours, you ought not to be
 ‘ surpris’d, that I have at last resolv’d to
 ‘ put a final end to a way of life so un-
 ‘ pleasing in the eyes of heaven, and so
 ‘ disagreeable to ourselves ;—it never was
 ‘ in my power to make you truly happy,
 ‘ nor in your will to make me even toler-
 ‘ able easy ; — I therefore fly for ever
 ‘ from your ill usage, and once more put
 ‘ myself under the protection of my
 ‘ friends, to whom I also shall commit
 ‘ the care of settling with you the terms
 ‘ of our separation, which being once
 ‘ agreed upon, you will not be troubled
 ‘ either with the complaints, or the re-
 ‘ proaches, of

‘ Your much injured wife,

‘ B. MUNDEN.

‘ P. S. I have removed nothing out of
 ‘ your house but what was my own be-
 ‘ fore marriage.’

Upon

Upon enquiring farther into the matter, he was informed that Mrs. Munden had indeed removed a large India chest, a bureau cabinet dressing-table, and in, fine, every thing that belonged immediately to herself, and also that his family was now reduced to two, her own man and maid having followed her.

All this convincing him how much she was in earnest, involved him in the most perplexing cogitations; — not that he regretted the parting with her through any remains of affection, or that his hardened heart was touched with a just sensibility of her merit, or with any repentance of his ill treatment of her; but that he knew such an affair must necessarily be attended with some noise and confusion, and in many respects give him a good deal of embarrassment: — it was therefore these two last reasons, which alone determined him to make use of all his artifice to bring about a second reconciliation.

That beautiful lady in the mean time had thoughts much more composed; — her brother had received her in the most affectionate manner, — had approved of her conduct in regard to her unfaithful husband, — had assured her of the continuance

nuance of his friendship and protection, and before she could request it of him, invited her, and such of her servants as she chose should attend her, to remain in his house as long as she should think fit.—He desired her to take upon her the sole command and management of his house and family, and assigned the best apartment for her particular use : — in fine, he omitted nothing that might convince her of a sincere welcome.

On discoursing together concerning her obtaining a separate maintenance, it was the opinion of them both, that Mr. Markland the lawyer should be advised with, as he was a man who could not but be well experienced in such affairs, and accordingly a servant was dispatched to that gentleman, to desire he would come to them the next day.

But though she had reason to be highly satisfied with the reception given her by her brother, yet she could not be quite easy 'till she should hear what judgment her dear Lady Loveit would pass on the step she had taken.—She went the next morning to pay a visit at that lady's toilette,—she related to her sincerely every particular of the provocation she had received, the manner in which she had re-
sented

sented it, and the resolution she had taken of living in an eternal state of separation from so bad a man; to which Lady Loveit replied, that though she was extremely sorry for the occasion, yet she thought if she had acted otherwise, it would have been an injustice not only to herself, but to all wives in general, by setting them an example of submitting to things required of them neither by law nor nature.

This encouragement, from a lady of her known scrupulous disposition, made Mrs. Munden not doubt but she would be equally absolved by Lady Trusty, and her brother Frank, to both whom she wrote an account that evening of all she had done.

On her return from lady Loveit's, she found a letter from Mr. Munden in answer to that she had sent to him the day before: — the contents whereof were as follow:

To Mrs. MUNDEN.

• MADAM,

• THE unaccountableness of your be-
 • haviour astonishes me! For heaven's
 • sake, how can you answer to yourself
 • the

' the having quitted your husband's house
 ' for so trifling a pretence? — It is true,
 ' I did not at first give much regard to
 ' your complaint against mademoiselle de
 ' Roquelair, but on considering it, I
 ' obliged her to depart immediately.—I
 ' do assure you, she set out yesterday for
 ' Dover, and I believe by this time is as
 ' far as Calais, on her way to Bologne, so
 ' that there now remains no excuse for
 ' your absenting yourself, and if you
 ' should continue to do so, it will be a
 ' very plain proof, that you are extremely
 ' wanting in that duty and affection,
 ' which the laws both of God and man
 ' expect from you.---But I flatter myself
 ' that is not the case, and therefore expect
 ' you will return with all possible expedi-
 ' tion to him, who will be always ready
 ' to prove himself

' Your most affectionate husband,

' G. MUNDEN."

' P. S. I know not what you mean by
 ' settling terms of separation; ---- a
 ' wife who elopes from her husband,
 ' forfeits all claim to every thing that
 ' is his, and can expect nothing from
 ' him 'till she returns to her obedience;
 ' but were it otherwise, and the law
 ' were entirely on your side in this
 ' point,

MISS BETSY THOUGHTLESS. 239

‘ point, you might be certain, that I
‘ look upon the happiness of possessing
‘ you in too just a light to be easily
‘ brought into any agreement that
‘ would deprive me of you.’

Though Mr. Munden wanted not cunning in most things, yet in writing this epistle he seemed not to consider the spirit or the penetration of his wife, who, he might have known, had too great a share of both, to be either intimidated by the majestic air of some of the expressions, or soothed by the fawning, unsincere compliments of the others.

This vain attempt therefore only served to remind her of the many proofs she had received both of his ill nature and deceit towards her, instead of weakening the resolution she had taken of not living with him again, rather rendered it more strong and permanent.



C H A P. XX.

More of the same:

MR. Markland did not, like too many of his profession, ever flatter his clients with an assurance of success in any cause, of which he himself was doubtful :---He plainly told Mrs. Munden, that he feared not all the ill usage she had sustained would be sufficient to compel her husband to allow her a separate maintenance. --- ‘ Honour and generosity may ‘ indeed,’ added he, ‘ oblige him to do ‘ that, which I am very apprehensive the ‘ law will not enforce him to.’

‘ Alas,’ cried Mrs. Munden, bursting into tears, ‘ if I can have no relief but ‘ from his honour and generosity, I must ‘ be miserable.’---‘ Not so, my dear sister,’ said Mr. Thoughtless, ‘ while you have ‘ a brother, who has it in his power to support you against all the injuries of fortune, and the injustice of a husband so ‘ unworthy of you.’

She

She thanked him in terms which so affectionate an offer demanded from her, but could not help appearing very much dejected at what Mr. Markland had said to her; on which, ‘Madam, said he, though the letter of the law may not be altogether so favourable for you in this point, as you certainly deserve, yet notwithstanding that, and how refractory soever Mr. Munden may be in his principles or dispositions, I hope there may be means found to bring him to do you justice; — I will wait on him, — will talk to him in a proper manner, and do flatter myself with being able to give you a good account of what I have done.’

It is not to be doubted but both the brothers and the sister earnestly intreated he would exert all his abilities in an affair, which they easily saw would be difficult enough to manage; but the answers of this honest good-natured gentleman soon convinced them, that there was no need of any persuasions to induce him to do every thing in his power for the service of ill-treated innocence.

Mrs. Munden having told him, that about eleven o'clock was the most certain

time for her husband to be spoke with, he went the next morning at that hour; on sending up his name, Mr. Munden guessed the errand on which he came, but that did not hinder him from ordering he should be introduced, nor when he was so, from receiving him with that politeness he always used to strangers.

Mr. Markland began with telling him he was extremely sorry for the occasion on which he waited on him that morning, ‘I little imagined,’ said he, ‘that when I drew up the articles for a union between you, sir, and Mrs. Munden, I should ever have been employed in transacting a deed of separation: — but since it has unhappily proved so, I hope at least it may be done as amicably as the nature of the thing will admit.’

Mr. Munden at first affected to treat this proposal in a manner somewhat ludicrous; but perceiving it was not well taken by the other, — ‘You will pardon me, sir, cried he, ‘I protest I am under the greatest consternation in the world, that my wife should have the assurance to trouble a gentleman of your character on so foolish an affair: — upon
‘ my

‘ my honour, fir, there is nothing in it
‘ but mere whim,—caprice.’

‘ If I did not think it sufficiently seri-
‘ ous,’ replied Mr. Markland, ‘ and were
‘ not also well convinced you will hereafter
‘ find it so, I should not have given either
‘ myself or you the trouble of this visit,
‘ — but, fir,’ continued he, ‘ you may
‘ depend, that the lady’s complaints will
‘ have their weight.’

‘ All womanish spite, upon my soul,
‘ fir,’ resumed Mr. Munden; ‘ I defy her
‘ to accuse me of any one action that
‘ can justify her quitting my house, much
‘ less to prove any real injury received
‘ from me, without which you know,
‘ fir, there can be no pretence for separa-
‘ tion.’

‘ You cannot as yet, fir, be sensible
‘ what is in her power to prove,’ said the
‘ lawyer; ‘ but God forbid this unhappy
‘ dissention should ever come to that;
‘ for admitting she should be wanting in
‘ such proofs as the strictness of the law
‘ requires in these cases, the very at-
‘ tempt must necessarily involve you in
‘ an infinity of disquiet. — Consider, fir,’
‘ pursued he, ‘ when the affairs of a family
‘ are laid open, and every dispute be-

‘tween the husband and the wife exposed before a court of Judicature, or even in a petition to a Lord Chancellor, the whole becomes a public talk, and furnishes a matter of ridicule for the unthinking scoffers of the age.’

‘I can easily prevent all this,’ cried Mr. Munden hastily, ‘by procuring a warrant from the Lord Chief Justice to force her immediately home.’ — ‘You may certainly do so,’ cried Mr. Markland, with a half smile; — ‘but, sir, are you sure of keeping her at home, when you have got her there? — Is it not in her power to leave you again the same day, — nay, even the same hour in which you compelled her to return? so that your whole time may be spent in an unavailing chace, — somewhat of a piece with the fable of the Sisyphcean stone, which as often as the driver forced to the height he aimed at rolled back to its beloved descent. — In short, sir, as Mrs. Munden is determined to live apart, you have no way to preserve her but by confinement, and I appeal to your own judgment how that would look in the eyes of the world, and what occasion for complaint it would afford to all her friends, who would

'I would doubtless have a strict watch on your behaviour.'

These words threw Mr. Munden into a deep reverie, which the other would not interrupt, being willing to see how far this last remonstrance had worked upon him, 'till coming out of it, and vexed that he had shewed any discomposure,— ‘Well, sir,’ said he, ‘if she resolves to persist in this obstinacy, let her enjoy her humour, I shall give myself no pain about it;—but she must not expect I shall allow one penny towards her maintenance.’

It was on this head, that Mr. Markland found he had occasion to employ all the rhetoric he was master of:—he urged the unreasonableness, the injustice, the cruelty of denying the means of subsistence to a lady whose whole fortune he enjoyed;—said, such a thing was altogether unprecedented among persons of condition; and to prove what he alledged, produced many instances of wives, who, on parting from their husbands, were allowed a provision proportionable to the sums they had brought in marriage.

All these arguments were enforced in terms so strong and so pathetic, that Mr. Menden

Munden could make no other answer than, — that he did not desire to part, — that it was her own fault,—and that if she would not return to her duty, she ought to be starved into a more just sense of it; and that he was very sure the law would not compel him to do any thing for her: on which, Mr. Markland again reminded him of the vexation, the fatigue, the disgrace, with which a suit commenced by either party must be attended, in whose favour soever the decision should be made,

He talked so long on the subject, that Mr. Munden, either to get rid of him, or because he was really uncertain what to do, at last told him, that he would consider on what he had been saying, and let him know his resolution in a week's time. —Mr. Markland then replied, that he would trouble him no farther for the present, and after having prefixed a day for waiting on him again, took his leave.

The mind of Mr. Munden was indeed in the utmost confusion amidst that variety of vexatious incidents which he had now to struggle with, — the little probability he found there was of re-establishing himself in the favour of his patron,—the loss of all his hopes that way,—the sudden

sudden departure of a wife, whom, tho' he had no affection for, he looked upon as a necessary appendix to his house, — the noise her having taken such a step would make in the town, the apprehensions of being obliged to grant her a separate maintenance, all these things put together, it is certain were sufficient to overwhelm a man of a less impatient temper.

He cursed his amour with the French woman, as having been the cause of this last misfortune falling on him, and to prevent all farther trouble on her account, ordered, that the luggage she had left behind should be immediately put on board a vessel, and sent after her to Bologne; — he also wrote to her at the same time, acquainting her with the disturbance which had happened, and that it was highly necessary for his future peace, that he should see her no more, nor even hold any correspondence with her.

Mrs. Munden in the mean time was far from being perfectly easy, though Mr. Markland gave her hopes that her husband would very speedily be brought to settle things between them in a reasonable way, and her brother was every day giving her fresh assurances of his friendship

and protection, whether that event prov'd favourable or not ; yet all this was not enough to quell some scruples, which now rose in her mind ;—the violence of that passion which had made her resolve to leave Mr. Munden being a little evaporated, the vows she had made him at the altar were continually in her thoughts ;—she could not quite assure herself, that a breach of that solemn covenant was to be justified by any provocations ; nor whether the worst usage on the part of the husband could authorize resentment in that of a wife.

She was one day disburdening her disquiets on this score to her dear Lady Loveit, in terms which made that lady see more than ever she had done before, the height of her virtue, and the delicacy of her sentiments, when Sir Basil came hastily into the room with a paper in his hand, and after paying his compliments to Mrs. Munden,—‘ My dear,’ said he to his lady, ‘ I have very agreeable news to tell you, — I have just received a letter from my brother Trueworth, which informs me, that he is upon the road, and we shall have him with us this evening.’—‘ I am extremely glad,’ replied she, ‘ and likewise that he is so good to let us know
‘ it,

• it, that I may make some little prepa-
 • rations for his welcome.’

Mrs. Munden could not be told that Mr. Truworth was so near, and might presently be in the same room with her, without the utmost confusion, with the fearing would be observed, laid hold of the pretence Lady Loveit’s last words furnished her with, of taking her leave, and rising hastily up, ‘ I will wait on your ‘ Ladyship,’ said she, ‘ at a more convenient time ; for I perceive you are now ‘ going to be busy.’ — ‘ Not at all,’ replied the other ; ‘ three words will serve ‘ for all the instructions I have to give ; ‘ therefore, prithee, dear creature, sit ‘ down.’ — In speaking these words, she took hold of one of her hands, and Sir Basil of the other, in order to replace her on the settee she had just quitted ; but she resisting their efforts, and desiring to be excused staying any longer, — ‘ I protest,’ cried Lady Loveit, ‘ this sudden ‘ resolution of leaving us would make one ‘ think you did it to avoid Mr. Tru- ‘ worth, and if that be the case, I must ‘ tell you, that you are very ungrateful, ‘ as he always expresses the greatest re- ‘ gard for you.’ — ‘ Aye, aye,’ said Sir Basil, laughing, ‘ old love cannot be for- ‘ got: I have heard him utter many ten-

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‘ der things of the charming Miss Betsey
‘ Thoughtless, even since his marriage
‘ with my sister.’

‘ I ought not then,’ replied she, ‘ to
‘ increase the number of the obligations
‘ I have to him by that compassion, which
‘ I know he would bestow on my present
‘ distress, but I assure you, Sir Basil, I
‘ would not quit you, and my dear Lady
‘ Loveit, thus abruptly, if some letters I
‘ have to write, and other affairs, which
‘ require immediate dispatch, did not
‘ oblige me to it.’

On this, they would not offer to detain her, and she went home to give a loose to those agitations, which the mention of Mr. Truworth always involved her in.



CHAP. XXI.

Affords variety of amusements.

MRS. Munden was so ignorant of her own heart, in relation to what it felt on Mr. Truworth’s account, that she imagined she had only fled his presence, because

because she could not bear a man who had courted her so long, should see her thus unhappy by the choice she had made of another.

‘ I am well assured,’ cried she, ‘ that
 ‘ he has too much generosity to triumph
 ‘ in my misfortune, and too much complaisance to remind me of the cause ;
 ‘ —yet would his eyes tacitly reproach
 ‘ my want of judgment, —and mine too
 ‘ might perhaps in spite of me, confess, as
 ‘ the poet says, that

“ I, like the child, whose folly prov’d its loss,
 “ Refus’d the gold, and did accept the dross.”

This naturally leading her into some reflections on the merit of Mr. Truworth, she could not help wondering, by what infatuation she had been governed, when rejecting him, or what was tantamount to rejecting him, treating him in such a manner as might make him despair of being accepted. — ‘ What though my heart
 ‘ was insensible of love,’ said she, ‘ my
 ‘ reason, — nay my very pride, might
 ‘ have influenced me to embrace a proposal, which would have rendered me
 ‘ the envy of my own sex, and excited

‘ the esteem and veneration of the other.’
 — Thinking still more deeply, — ‘ O,
 ‘ God,’ cried she, with vehemence, ‘ to
 ‘ what a height of happiness might I
 ‘ have been raised! And into what an
 ‘ abyss of wretchedness am I now plunged!
 ‘ —Irretrievably undone, married without
 ‘ loving or being beloved, lost in my bloom
 ‘ of years to every joy that can make life
 ‘ a blessing!’

Nothing so much sharpens the edge of affliction as a consciousness of having brought it upon ourselves, to remember that all we could wish for, — all that could make us truly happy, was once in our power to be possessed of, and wantonly shunning the good that Heaven and Fortune offered, we headlong run into the ills we mourn, renders them doubly grievous.

This being the case with our heroine, how ought all the fair and young to guard against a vanity so fatal to a lady, who but for that one foible, had been the happiest, as she was in all other respects, the most deserving of her sex! — But to return :

A just sensibility of the errors of her past conduct, joined with some other emotions,

emotions, which the reader may easily guess at, though she as yet knew not the meaning of herself, gave her but little repose that night ; and pretty early the next morning she received no inconsiderable addition to her perplexities.

The time, in which Mr. Munden had promised to give his answer to the lawyer, was now near expired, yet he was as irrefolute as ever : — loth he was to have the affair between him and his wife made public, and equally loth to comply with her demands ; — before he did either, it therefore came into his head to try what effect menaces would produce, and accordingly wrote to her in these terms :

To Mrs. MUNDEN.

‘ MADAM,

‘ **THOUGH** your late behaviour has
 ‘ proved the little affection you have for
 ‘ me, I still retain too much for you to
 ‘ be able to part with you. ——— No, be
 ‘ assured, I never will forego the right
 ‘ that marriage give me over you, —
 ‘ will never yield to live a widower while
 ‘ I am a husband, and if you return not
 ‘ within four and twenty hours, shall
 ‘ take such measures as the law directs,
 ‘ to force you back to my embraces ;—
 ‘ by

' by this time to-morrow you may expect
 ' to have such company at your levee,
 ' as you will not be well pleased with,
 ' and from whose authority not all your
 ' friends can screen you : — but as I am
 ' unwilling to expose you, I once more
 ' court you to spare yourself this disgrace,
 ' and me the pain of inflicting it; — I
 ' give you this day to consider on what
 ' you have to do ; — the future peace of
 ' us both depends on your result, for your
 ' own reason ought to inform you, that
 ' being brought to me by compulsion, will
 ' deserve other sort of treatment than such
 ' as you might hope to find on returning
 ' of your own accord to

' Your much affronted husband,

' G. MUNDEN.'

This letter very much alarmed both
 the sister and the brother, ---- the former
 trembled at the thoughts of seeing her-
 self in the hands of the officers of justice,
 and the latter could not but be uneasy
 that a disturbance of this kind should
 happen in his house. ---- They were just
 going to send for Mr. Markland to con-
 sult him on what was to be done, when
 that gentleman, whom chance had brought
 that way, luckily came in. ————— He
 found

found Mr. Thoughtless in great discomposure, and Mrs. Munden almost drown'd in tears. On being informed of the occasion, ———— 'I see no reason,' said he, gravely, 'for all this, — I cannot think ' that Mr. Munden will put in execution ' what he threatens, at least not 'till after ' I have spoke to him again, — I rather ' think he writes in this manner only to ' terrify you, madam, into a submission to ' his will; however,' continued he, after a pretty long pause, ' to be secure from ' all danger of an affront this way, I think ' it would be highly proper you should ' retire to some place, where he may not ' know to find you, 'till I have once ' more tried how far he may be prevailed ' upon to do you justice.'

This advice being highly approved of, ' my wife's sister,' resumed he, ' has a ' very pleasant and commodious house on ' the bank of the river on the Surry side; ' --- she takes lodgers sometimes, but at ' present is without, so that if you resolve ' to be concealed, you cannot find a more ' convenient retreat, especially as its being ' so near London, nothing of moment ' can happen here, but what you may ' be apprized of in little more than an ' hour.'

Mrs.

Mrs. Munden testifying as much satisfaction at this proposal as a person in her circumstances could be capable of feeling, Mr. Markland told her, that he was ready to conduct her immediately to the place he mentioned, and her brother adding that he would accompany them, and see his sister safe to her new abode, they all set out together on their little voyage, Mrs. Munden having first given directions to her servants where they should follow her with such things, as she thought would be wanted during her stay there.

On their arrival they found Mr. Markland had spoken very modestly of the place he recommended: the house was pleasant almost beyond description, and rendered much more so by the obliging behaviour of its owner.

They all dined together that day, and on parting it was agreed, that Mrs. Munden should send her man every morning to town, in order to bring her intelligence of whatever accidents had happened in relation to her affairs on the preceding day.

As much as this lady had been rejoiced at the kind reception she had met with
from

from her brother under her misfortunes, she was now equally pleased at being removed for a time from him, not only because she thought herself secure from any insults that might be offered by her husband, but also because this private recess seemed a certain defence against the sight of Mr. Trueworth; — a thing she knew not well how to have avoided in town, without breaking off her acquaintance with Lady Loveit.

After the gentlemen were gone, the sister-in-law of Mr. Markland led her fair guest into the garden, which before she had only a cursory view of:—she shewed her, among many other things, several curious exotic plants, which she told her she had procured from the nurseries of some persons of condition, to whom she had the honour to be known; but Mrs. Munden being no great connoisseur that way, did not take much notice of what she said concerning them, 'till coming to the lower end, she perceived a little wicket gate, — 'To where does 'this lead?' cried she: 'I will shew you 'presently, madam,' replied the other, and pulling it open, they both entered into a grass walk, hemmed in on each side with trees, which, seemed as old as the creation: — they had not gone many
paces.

paces, before an arbour, erected between two of these venerable monuments of antiquity, and overspread with jessamines and honey-suckles, attracted Mrs. Munden's eyes.—‘ Oh, how delightful is this! said she: — ‘ It would have been much more so, madam, if it had been placed on the other side of the walk,’ said the gentlewoman, ‘ and if I live ’till next spring, will have the position of it altered; — you will presently see my reasons for it,’ continued she, ‘ if you please to turn your eyes a little to the right.’ — Mrs. Munden doing as she was desired, had the prospect of a very beautiful garden, decorated with plots of flowers, statues, and trees cut in a most elegant manner. — ‘ Does all this belong to you,’ demanded she, somewhat surprised? — ‘ No, madam,’ answered the other; ‘ but they are part of the same estate, and at present rented by a gentleman of condition, who lives at the next door:—the walk we are in is also common to us both, each having a gate to enter it at pleasure, though indeed they little frequent it, having much finer of their own.’—With such like chat they beguiled the time ’till the evening dew reminded them it was best to quit the open air.

Mrs.

Mrs. Munden passed this night in more tranquility than she had done many preceding ones: — she awoke, however, much sooner than was her custom, and finding herself less disposed to return to the embraces of sleep than to partake that felicity, she heard a thousand chearful birds tuning their little throats in praise of, she rose, and went down into the garden, — the contemplative humour she was in, led her to the arbour she had been so much charmed with the night before: — she threw herself upon the mossy seat, where scenting the fragrancy of the sweets around her, made more delicious by the freshness of the morning's gale, — ‘How delightful, — how heavenly,’ said she to herself, is this solitude! how ‘truly preferable to all the noisy, giddy ‘pleasures of the tumultuous town; yet ‘how have I despised, and ridiculed the ‘soft sincerity of a country life?’ — Then recollecting some discourse she formerly had with Mr. Truworth on that subject, ‘—I wonder,’ cried she, ‘what Mr. True-
 ‘worth would say if he knew the change
 ‘that a little time has wrought in me!
 ‘he would certainly find me now more
 ‘deserving of his friendship than ever
 ‘he could think me of his love; — but
 ‘he is ignorant, — insensible of my real
 ‘sentiments,

' sentiments; and if Sir Basil and Lady
 ' Loveit should tell him with what abrupt-
 ' ness I fled their house at the news of his
 ' approach, I must appear in his eyes the
 ' most vain, stupid, thankless creature I
 ' once was; — but such is my unhappy
 ' situation, that I dare not even wish he
 ' should discover what passes in my heart;
 ' — the just sensibility of his amiable qua-
 ' lities, and of the services he has done
 ' me, which would once have been meri-
 ' torious in me to have avowed, would
 ' now be highly criminal.'

With these reflections she took Mr.
 Trueworth's picture, which she always
 carried about her, and looking on it with
 the greatest tenderness, — ' Though I no
 ' more must see himself,' said she, ' I may
 ' at least be allowed to pay the tribute of
 ' my gratitude to this dumb representa-
 ' tive of the man to whom I have been
 ' so much obliged.' — At this instant, a
 thousand proofs of love given her by the
 original of the copy in her hand occurring
 all at once to her remembrance, tears
 filled her eyes, and her breast swelled
 with involuntary sighs.

In this painfully pleasing amusement
 did she continue for some time, and had
 doubtless done so much longer, if a sud-
 den

den rustling among the leaves behind her, had not made her turn her head to see what had occasioned it; — but where are the words that can express the surprize, the wild confusion she was in, when the first glance of her eyes presented her with the sight of the real object, whose image she had been thus tenderly contemplating: — she shriek'd, the picture dropp'd from her hand, the use of her faculties forsook her, she sunk from the seat where she was sitting, and had certainly fainted quite away, but for the immediate assistance of the person who had caused the extraordinary emotions.

Her fancy indeed, strong as it was, had formed no visionary appearance: it was the very identical Mr. Trueworth, who chance had brought to make the discovery of a secret, which of all things in the world he had the least suspicion of.

He was intimately acquainted with the person to whom the house adjoining to that where Mrs. Munden lodged belong'd, and hearing where he was, on his return from Oxfordshire, had come the evening before, intending to pass a day or two with him in this agreeable recess.

As

As he was never a friend to much sleeping, he rose that morning, and went down into the garden before the greatest part of the family had quitted their beds; he saw Mrs. Munden while at too great a distance to know who she was, yet did her air and motion as she walk'd, strike him with something, which made him willing to see what sort of face belong'd to so genteel a form; — drawing more near, his curiosity was gratified with a sight he little expected: — he was just about to accost her with the salutation of the morning, when she went into the arbour, and seated herself in the manner already described: — the extreme pensiveness of her mind had hinder'd her from perceiving that any one was near, but the little covert under which she was placed being open on both sides, he had a full view of every thing she did: — though she was in the most negligent night-dress that could be, she seem'd as lovely to him as ever; all his first flames rekindled in his heart, while gazing on her with this uninterrupted freedom, — he long'd to speak to her, but durst not, lest by doing so he should be deprived of the pleasure he now enjoy'd, 'till observing she had something in her hand, which she seem'd to look upon with great

great attention, and sometimes betray'd agitations he had never seen in her before, he was impatient to discover, if possible, the motive; — he therefore advanced as gently as he could towards the back of the arbour, which having no wood-work, and the leafy canopy only supported by ozier boughs, placed at a good distance from each other, he had a full opportunity of beholding all that the reader has been told: — but what was his amazement to find it was his own picture! that very picture, which had been taken from the painter's, was the object of her meditations! — he heard her sighs, he saw her lovely hand frequently put up to wipe away the tears that fell from her eyes while looking on it; — he also saw her more than once, though doubtless in those moments not knowing what she did, press the lifeless image to her bosom with the utmost tenderness; — scarce could he give credit to the testimony of his senses, near as he was to her, he even strain'd his sight to be more sure, and forgetting all the precautions he had taken, thrust himself as far as he was able between the branches of which the arbour was composed.

On perceiving the effect this last action had produced, the gate, though not above

twenty paces off, seemed too slow a passage to fly to her relief, and setting his foot upon a pedestal of a statue, quick as thought, or the flash of elemental fire, sprang over the myrtle hedge that parted the garden from the walk, — ‘ Ah, madam, cried he, catching her in his arms, to hinder her from falling, — ‘ What has the ‘ unhappy Trueworth done to render his ‘ presence so alarming! — How have I ‘ deserved to appear thus dreadful in your ‘ eyes!’

That admirable presence of mind, which Mrs. Munden had shewn on many occasions, did not in this entirely leave her; — the time he was speaking those few words sufficed to enable her to recollect her scatter’d spirits, and withdrawing herself from the hold he had taken of her, and removing a little farther on the bench, as if to give him room to sit, — ‘ Sir,’ said she, with a voice pretty well composed, — ‘ the obligations I have to you ‘ demand other sort of sentiments than ‘ those you seem to accuse me of; — but ‘ I thought myself alone, and was not ‘ guarded against the surprize of meeting you in this place.’ — ‘ I ought indeed,’ replied he, ‘ to have been more ‘ cautious in my approach, especially ‘ as I found you deep in contemplation, ‘ which

‘ which perhaps I have been my own
 enemy by interrupting.’

‘Till he spoke in this manner, she was not quite assured how far he had been witness of her behaviour, but what he now said confirming her of what she had but feared before, threw her into a second confusion little inferior to the former ; — he saw it, — but saw it without that pity he would have felt had it proceeded from any other motive, and eager to bring her to a more full eclaircissement, — ‘ If you really think, madam,’ said he, ‘ that you have any obligations to me, you may requite them all by answering sincerely to one question : — Tell me, I beseech you,’ continued he, taking up the picture, which she had neither thought nor opportunity to remove from the place where it had fallen, ‘ resolve me how this little picture came into your possession?’ What was now the condition of Mrs. Munden ! — She could neither find any pretence to evade the truth, nor fit words to confess it, ‘till Mr. Truworth repeating his request, and vowing he would never leave her ‘till she granted it, — ‘ What need have I to answer?’ said she, blushing ; — ‘ you know in what manner it was taken from the painter’s, and the sight of it

‘ in my hand is sufficient to inform you
‘ of the whole.’

‘ Charming declaration — transporting
‘ — ravishing to thought!’ cried he, kiss-
‘ ing her hand, ---- ‘ O had I known it
‘ sooner, engaged as I then was to one
‘ who well deserved my love, could I
‘ have guessed Miss Betsy Thoughtless
‘ was the contriver of that tender fraud,
‘ I know not what revolution might have
‘ happened in my heart! the empire
‘ you had there, was never totally extir-
‘ pated, and kindness might have re-
‘ gained what cruelty had lost!’ ---- ‘ Do
‘ not deceive yourself Sir, said she, in-
‘ terrupting him with all the courage she
‘ could assume, ‘ nor mistake that for
‘ love, which was only the effects of mere
‘ gratitude.’ These words were accom-
‘ panied with a look, which once would
‘ have struck him with the most submissive
‘ awe, but he was now too well acquainted
‘ with the sentiments she had for him to be
‘ deterred by any other outward shew of
‘ coldness; — ‘ Call it by what name you
‘ please,’ cried he, ‘ so you permit me
‘ the continuance of it, and vouchsafe
‘ me the same favours you bestow on my
‘ insensible resemblance.’ — In speaking
‘ this, he threw his arms about her waist,
‘ not regarding the efforts she made to hin-
‘ der him, and clasp’d her to his breast
‘ with

with a vehemence, which in all his days of courtship to her he never durst attempt :--- ‘ Forbear, Sir,’ said she, ‘ you know I am not at liberty to be entertained with discourses, nor with actions of this nature ;----loose me this moment, or be assured all the kind thoughts I had of you, and on which you have too much presumed, will be converted into the extremeſt hate and detestation.’----The voice, in which ſhe uttered this menace, convincing him how much ſhe was in earneſt, he let go his hold, removed ſome paces from her, and beheld her for ſome moments with a ſilent admiration :---‘ I have obeyed you, madam,’ cried he, with a deep ſigh, ----‘ you are all angel, ---- be all angel ſtill ; far be it from me to tempt you from the glorious height you ſtand in ; yet how unhappy has this interview made me ! ----- I love you without daring even to wiſh for a return ! nay ſo fully has your virtue conquered, that I muſt love you more for the repulſe you have given my too audacious hopes ;---- you may at leaſt pity the fate to which I am condemned.’

‘ It would be in vain for me,’ replied ſhe, in a voice ſomewhat broken by the inward conflict ſhe ſuſtained, ‘ to endeavour to conceal what my inadvertencies

‘ tendencies have so fully betrayed to you,
 ‘ and you may assure yourself, that I shall
 ‘ think on you with all the tenderness
 ‘ that honour and the duties of my station
 ‘ will admit :--- but remember, Sir, I am
 ‘ a wife, and being such, ought never to
 ‘ see you more ; ----in regard therefore to
 ‘ my reputation and peace of mind, I
 ‘ must intreat you will henceforth avoid
 ‘ my presence, with the same care I will
 ‘ do your’s.’

‘ Severe as this injunction is,’ replied
 he, ‘ my soul avows the justice of it, and
 ‘ I submit.’ ---- ‘ Farewell then,’ said she,
 rising from her seat, ‘ Oh farewell,’ cried
 he, and kissed her hand with emotions
 not to be expressed: ‘ Farewel for ever,’
 rejoined she, turned hastily away to
 prevent his seeing the tears, with which
 her eyes were overcharged, and in that
 cruel instant overflowed her cheeks : ---
 she advanced with all the speed she could
 towards the wicket-gate, but when there,
 could not forbear giving one look behind,
 and perceiving he had left the walk, and
 was proceeding through the garden with
 folded arms, and a dejected pace, ‘ Poor
 ‘ Trueworth!’ cried she, and pursued him
 with her eyes ‘till he was quite out of
 sight.

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Some readers may perhaps blame Mr. Truworth, as having presumed too far on the discovery of the lady's passion, and others of a contrary way of thinking, laugh at him for being so easily repulsed, but all in general must applaud the conduct of Mrs. Munden; 'till this dangerous instance she had never had an opportunity of shewing the command she had over herself, and as Mr. Eastcourt justly says,

' No'r let the fair one boast of virtue prov'd,
'Till she has well refus'd the man she truly
lov'd.



CHAP. XXII.

Is less pleasing than the former.

AFTER this solemn parting between Mr. Truworth and Mrs. Munden, that lady's mind was in too much disorder to think what was become of the little picture that had occasioned it, 'till an hour or two after, the maid of the house came running into the chamber with it in her hand, ' Does this pretty picture belong to you, Madam?' said she:-----Mrs. Munden started, but soon recovering herself, answered it did; said

that it was the picture of her younger brother, and that she believed she might pull it out of her pocket with her handkerchief, or some how or other drop it in the walk.---‘Aye, to be sure it was so,’ said the maid, ‘for it was there I found it;----as I was going to the pump for some water, I saw something that glittered just by the little arbour, on which I run, and took it up, but my mistress told me she believed it was yours, for she knew your ladyship was in the walk this morning.’----‘I am glad thou hast found it,’ replied Mrs. Munden, ‘for it would have vexed me to the heart to have lost it.’-----‘Aye, to be sure, madam,’ cried she, ‘for it is a sweet picture, your brother is a handsome gentleman, I warrant there are a thousand ladies in love with him.’---Mrs. Munden could not forbear smiling at the simplicity of the wench, but willing to be rid of her rewarded her honesty with a crown piece, and dismissed her.

She was rejoiced indeed to have this picture once more in her possession, not only because some other might have found, and kept it, but also because she thought she might indulge herself in looking on it, without any breach of that duty, to which she was resolved so strictly to

to adhere ; — To be secure however from a second recounter with the original in that place, she kept close in the house, and stirred not out of it all the time he was there ; — but her apprehensions on this score were needless, — Mr. Truworth religiously observed the promise he had made her, and lest he should be under any temptation to break it while so near her, took leave of his friend that same day, and returned to London, but carried with him sentiments very different from those he had brought down, as will hereafter appear.

As to Mrs. Munden, she found that she had no less occasion for exerting the heroine when alone, than when encircled in the arms of Mr. Truworth : — the accident, which had betrayed the secret of her heart to him, had also discovered it to herself. — She was now convinced, that it was something more than esteem, --- than friendship, --- than gratitude, his merits had inspired her with ; --- she was conscious, that while she most resisted the glowing pressure of his lips, she had felt a guilty pleasure in the touch, which had been near depriving her of doing so, and that though she had resolved never to see him more, it would be very difficult to refrain wishing to be for ever with him.

This she thought so highly criminal in herself, that she ought not to indulge the remembrance of so dear, so dangerous an invader of her duty; yet when she considered, that merely for her sake, and not through the weak resistance she had made, his own honour had nobly triumphed over wild desire in a heart so young, and amorous as his, it increased that love and admiration which she in vain endeavoured to subdue, and she could not help crying out with Calista in the play,

' Oh had I sooner known thy wond'rous virtue,
' Thy love, thy truth, thou excellent young
' man,
' We might have both been happy.'

But to banish as much as possible all those ideas, which her nicety of honour made her tremble at, it was her fixed determination to retire into L——, as soon as she had ended her affairs with her husband, and pass the remainder of her days, where she should never hear the too dear name of Truworth.

She did not therefore neglect sending her servant to town, but he returned that day, and several succeeding ones without the least intelligence; ---- no letter nor
message

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message from Mr. Munden having been left for her at her brother's, on which she began to imagine, that he never had in reality intended to put his threats in execution.

Mr. Markland, in the mean time, had been twice to wait on him, but the servants had told him, that their master was extremely indisposed, and could not be seen : — this he looked upon as a feint to put off giving him an answer as he had promised, and both Mr. Thoughtless and his sister were of the same opinion when they heard it.---Mr. Markland went again and again, however, but was still denied access ;--- near a whole week passing over in this manner, Mrs. Munden grew very uneasy, fearing she should be able to obtain as little justice, as favour from her husband.

But guilty as he had been in other respects, he was intirely innocent in this ;--- the force of the agitation he had of late sustained, joined to repeated debauches, had over-heated his blood, and thrown him into a very violent fever, in so much that in a few days his life was despaired of ; ----- the whispers of all about him, ——— the looks of the physician that attended him, and above all what he felt

within himself, convincing him of the danger he was in, all his vices, all his excesses now appeared to him such as they truly were, and filled him with a remorse, which he had been but too much addicted to ridicule in others; ---- in fine, the horrors of approaching dissolution rendered him one of those many examples, which daily verify these words of Mr. Dryden,

- ‘ Sure there are none but fear a future state !
- ‘ And when the most obdurate swear they do not,
- ‘ Their trembling hearts bely their boasting
tongues.’

Among the number of those faults, which presented him with the most dreadful images, that of the ill treatment he had given a wife, who so little deserved it, lay not the least heavy upon his conscience; ----- he sent his servant to Mr. Thoughtless, at whose house he imagined she still was, to intreat he would prevail on her to see him before he died: --- but that gentleman giving a very slight answer, as believing it all artifice, he engaged the apothecary that administered to him, and was known by Mr. Thoughtless, to go on the same errand; on which the brother of Mrs. Munden said, she was not with him at present, but he would send to let her know what had happened; accordingly

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accordingly he dispatched one of his men immediately to her with the following billet.

To Mrs. MUNDEN.

‘DEAR SISTER,

‘MR. Cardiac the apothecary assures me, that your husband is in fact ill, and in extreme danger; — he is very pressing to see you:—I will not pretend to advise you what to do on this occasion, — you are the best judge; I shall only say, that if you think fit to comply with his request, you must be speedy, for it seems it is the opinion of the gentlemen of the faculty, that he is very near his end. I am, dear sister,

‘Your’s affectionately,

‘T. THOUGHTLESS.”

Not all the indifference she had for the person of Mr. Munden, ---- not all the resentment his moroseness and ill nature had excited in her, could hinder her from feeling an extreme shock on hearing his life was in danger; --- she fought for no excuses, either to evade, or delay what he desired of her; she went directly to him, equally inclined to do so by her compassion, as she thought herself obliged to it by her duty.

As she entered the chamber she met the apothecary coming out ; --- in asking him some questions, though she spoke very low, Mr. Munden thought he distinguished her voice, and cried out as loud as he was able, ' Is my wife here ? ' On which approaching the bed, and gently opening one of the curtains, --- ' Yes, Mr. Munden,' replied she, ' I am come to offer all the assistance in my power, and am sorry to find you are in any need of it.' — ' This is very kind,' said he, and stretched out one of his hands towards her, which she took between her's with a great deal of tenderness, ' I have been much to blame,' resumed he, ' I have greatly wronged you, but forgive me, — if I live, I will endeavour to deserve it.'

' I hope,' said she, ' heaven will restore your health, and that we may live together in a manner becoming persons united as we are.' ---- ' Then you will not leave me,' cried he ; ' Never,' answered she, ' unless your behaviour shall convince me you do not desire my stay.'

Here he began to make solemn protestations of future amendment, but his voice failing him through extreme weakness, a deep sigh, and tender pressure of his cheek to her's as she leaned her head upon

upon the pillow, gave her to understand what more he would have said :—on this she assured him she was ready to believe every thing he would have her, intreated him to compose himself, and endeavour to get a little rest ;—‘ In the mean time,’ said she, ‘ I will order things so that I may lie in the same room with you, and quit your presence neither night nor day.’

Here he pressed his face close to hers again, in token of the satisfaction he felt in hearing what she said, and the nurse who attended him that instant, presenting him with some things the physician had ordered should be given him about that hour, joined her entreaties with those of Mrs. Munden, that he would try to sleep, to which he made a sign that he would do so ; — and the curtains being drawn, they both retired to the farther end of the room.

As he lay pretty quiet for a considerable time, Mrs. Munden recollected, that there was a thing, which friendship and good manners exacted from her ; — she had wrote the very day before a letter to Lady Loveit, acquainting her with the motive which had obliged her to quit her brother’s house, and desiring she would favour her
with

with a visit as soon as convenience would permit, at the place of her retirement.—As she doubted not but the good-nature of this lady would prevail on her to comply with her request, she could not dispense with sending her an immediate account of the sudden revolution in her affairs, and the accident which had occasioned this second removal.

She had no sooner dispatched a little billet for this purpose, than the groans of Mr. Munden testifying that he was awake, drew both her and the nurse again to the bed-side : — they found him in very great agonies, and without the power of speech ; the doctor and apothecary were sent for in a great hurry, but before either of them came, the unhappy gentleman had breathed his last.

Mrs. Munden had not affected any thing more in this interview than what she really felt ; — her virtue and her compassion had all the effect on her that love has in most others of her sex ; she had been deeply troubled at finding her husband in so deplorable a situation ; the tenderness he had now expressed for her, and his contrition for his past faults, made a great impression on her mind, and the shock of seeing him depart was truly dreadful to her ; — the
grief

grief she appeared in was undissembled, —the tears she shed unforced ;—she withdrew into another room, where shutting herself up for some hours, life, death, and futurity were the subject of her meditations.



C H A P. XXIII.

Contains a very brief account of every material occurrence that happened in regard of our fair widow, during the space of a whole year, with some other particulars of less moment.

MR. Thoughtless was not at home when the news of Mr. Munden's death arrived, but as soon as he was informed of it, he went to his sister, and on finding her much more deeply affected at this accident than he could have imagined, pressed her in the most tender terms to quit that scene of mortality, and return to his house : — the persuasions of a brother, who of late had behaved with so much kindness towards her, prevailed on her to accept of the invitation, and having given some necessary orders in regard to the family, was carried away that same night

night in a chair with the curtains close drawn.

She saw no company however, 'till after the funeral, and when that was over, Lady Loveit was the first admitted.—As Mrs. Munden was still under a great dejection of spirits, which was visible in her countenance,—‘ If I did not know you to be
 ‘ the sincerest creature in the world,’ said Lady Loveit, ‘ I should take you to be the greatest dissembler in it,—for it would
 ‘ be very difficult for any one less acquainted with you to believe you could
 ‘ be really afflicted at the death of a person, whose life rendered you so unhappy.’

‘ Mistake me not, my dear Lady Loveit,’ answered she, ‘ I do not pretend to lament the death of Mr. Munden, as it
 ‘ deprives me of his society, or as that of a person with whom I could ever have
 ‘ enjoyed any great share of felicity, even though his life had made good the professions of his last moments ;—but I lament him as one who was my husband,
 ‘ whom duty forbade me to hate while living, and whom decency requires me to mourn for when dead.’

‘ So then,’ cried Lady Loveit, ‘ I find you take as much pains to grieve for a
 ‘ bad

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‘ bad husband, as those who have the mis-
‘ fortune to lose a good one do, to alle-
‘ viate their sorrows ;—but, my dear,’
continued she, with a more serious air,—
‘ I see no occasion for all this.—I am
‘ well assured, that your virtue, and the
‘ sweetness of your temper, enabled you
‘ to discharge all the duties of a wife to
‘ Mr. Munden while alive, and with that
‘ I think you ought to be content :—he is
‘ now dead, the covenant between you is
‘ dissolved, heaven has released you, and
‘ I hope forgiven him ;—decency obliges
‘ you to wear black, forbids you to appear
‘ abroad for a whole month, and at any
‘ public place of diversion for a much
‘ longer time ; but it does not restrain
‘ you from being easy in yourself, and
‘ cheerful with your friends.’

‘ Your Ladyship speaks right,’ said
Mrs. Munden, ‘ but yet there is a shock
‘ in death, which one cannot presently
‘ get over.’—‘ I grant there is,’ replied
Lady Loveit, ‘ and if we thought too
‘ deeply on it, we should feel all the ago-
‘ nies of that dreadful hour before our
‘ time, and become a burthen to ourselves
‘ and to the world.’

It is certain, indeed, that the surprize
and pity for Mr. Munden’s sudden and

unex-

unexpected fate; had at the first overwhelmed her soul, yet when those emotions were a little evaporated, she rather indulged affliction, because she thought it her duty to do so, than endeavoured any way to combat with it.

It was not therefore very difficult to reason her out of a melancholy, which she had in a manner forced upon herself, and was far from being natural to her, and when once convinced, that she ought to be easy under this stroke of providence, became entirely so.

The painful task she had imposed upon her mind being over, more agreeable ones succeeded: — the remembrance of Mr. Trueworth, — his recovered love, — the knowledge he had of hers, and the consideration that now both of them were in a condition to avow their mutual tenderness without a crime, could not but transfuse a sensation more pleasing than she had ever before been capable of experiencing.

In the mean time, that gentleman passed through a variety of emotions on her account, nor will it seem strange he should do so to any one, who casts the least retrospect on his former behaviour; — he had loved her from the first moment he beheld her,

her, and had continued to love her for a long series of time with such an excess of passion, that not all his reason on her ill treatment of him, and her supposed unworthiness, was scarce sufficient to enable him wholly to desist :—a new amour was requisite to divide his wishes ;—the fondness and artful blandishments of Miss Flora, served to wean his heart from the once darling object, but there demanded no less than the amiable person, and more amiable temper of Miss Harriot to drive thence an idea so accustomed to preside : — all this, however, as it appeared, did not wholly extinguish the first flame : — the innocence of the charming Miss Betsy fully cleared, all the errors of her conduct reformed, rekindled in him an esteem ; — the sight of her, after so many months absence, made the seemingly dead embers of desire begin to glow, and on the discovery of her sentiments in his favour, burst forth into a blaze : — he was not master of himself in the first rush of so joyous a surprize ; he forgot that she was married, --- he approached her in the manner the reader has been already told, and for which he afterwards severely condemned himself, as thinking he ought to be content with knowing she loved him, without putting her modesty to the blush

blush by letting her perceive the discovery he had made.

As Lady Loveit, without suspecting the effect which her discourse produced, had been often talking of the ill treatment she received from Mr. Munden, and the necessity she had been under of quitting his house,---the sincere veneration she now had for her, made him sympathize in all the disquiets he was sensible she sustained: -- but when he heard this cruel husband was no more, and at the same time was informed in what manner she behaved, both in his last moments, and after his decease, nothing, not even his love, could equal his admiration of her virtue and her prudence.

What would he not now have given to have seen her! but he knew such a thing was utterly impracticable, and to attempt it might lose him all the tenderness she had for him; --- his impatience, however, would not suffer him to seem altogether passive and unconcerned at an event of so much moment to the happiness of them both, and he resolved to write, but to find terms to express himself so as not to offend either her delicacy, by seeming too presuming, or her tenderness, by a pretended
indif-

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indifference, cost him some pains.—but at length he dictated the following little billet :

To Mrs. MUNDEN.

‘ MADAM,

‘ I SEND you no compliment of condolence, but beg you to be assured, that
‘ my heart is too deeply interested in
‘ every thing that regards you, to be capable of feeling the least satisfaction
‘ while yours remains under any inquietude; — all I wish at present is, that
‘ you would believe this truth, which if you do, I know you have too much justice and too much generosity to lavish all your commiseration on the insensible dead, but will reserve some part for the living, who stand most in need of it :
‘ — I dare add no more as yet, than that
‘ I am, with an esteem perfect and invaluable,

‘ MADAM,

‘ Your most obedient,

‘ Most devoted,

‘ And most faithful servant,

‘ C. TRUEWORTH.’

These few lines, perhaps, served more to
raise

raise the spirits of Mrs. Munden than all she could receive from any other quarter ; — she nevertheless persevered in maintaining the decorum of her condition, and as she had resolved to retire into L———e in case of a separation from her husband, she thought it most proper to fix her residence in that place in her state of widowhood, at least for the first year of it.

Accordingly she wrote to Lady Trusty to acquaint her with her intentions, and received an answer such as she expected, full of praises of her conduct in this point, and the most pressing invitations to come down with all the speed she could.

What little business she had in London was soon dispatched, and all was ready for her quitting it within a month after the death of Mr. Munden : — places for herself and maid were taken in the stage coach, — all her things were packed up, and sent to the inn ; — she thought nothing now remained but to take leave of Lady Loveit, whom she expected that same evening, being the last she was to stay in town ; but near as her departure was, fortune in the mean time had contrived an accident, which put all her fortitude, and presence of mind to as
great

great a trial, as she had ever yet sustained.

Lady Loveit having got a cold, had complained of some little disorder the day before, and though nothing could be more slight than her indisposition, yet, as she was pretty far advanced in her pregnancy, the care of her physician, and the tenderness of Sir Basil, would not permit her by any means to expose herself to the open air.

Mrs. Munden being informed by a messenger from her of what had happened, found herself under an absolute necessity of waiting on her, as it would have been ridiculous and preposterous, as well as unkind, to have quitted the town for so long a time without taking leave of a friend such as Lady Loveit.

She could not think of going there without reflecting at the same time how strong a probability there was of meeting Mr. Truworth ; — she knew indeed that he did not live at Sir Basil's, having heard he had lately taken a house for himself, but she knew also, that his close connection with that family made him seldom let slip a day without seeing them ; — she therefore prepared herself as well as she was
able

able for such an interview, in case it should so happen.

That gentleman had dined there, and on finding Lady Loveit was forbid going abroad, and Sir Bazil unwilling to leave her alone, had consented to stay with them the whole day : — they were at ombre when Mrs. Munden came, but on her entrance threw aside the cards ; — Lady Loveit received her according to the familiarity between them, and Sir Bazil with little less freedom, but Mr. Truworth saluted her with a more distant air ; — ‘ I had not the honour, madam,’ said he, ‘ to make you any compliments on either of the great changes you have undergone, but you have always had my best wishes for your prosperity.’

Mrs. Munden, who had pretty well armed herself for this encounter, replied with a voice and countenance tolerably well composed, — ‘ Great changes indeed, sir, have happened to us both in a short space of time.’ — ‘ There has so, madam,’ resumed he, ‘ but may the next you meet with bring with it lasting happiness !’ — She easily comprehended the meaning of these words, but made no answer, being at a loss what to say, which might neither too much embolden

embolden, nor wholly discourage the motive, which dictated them.

After this, the conversation turned on various subjects, but chiefly on that of Mrs. Munden's going out of town : — Mr. Truworth said little ; — Lady Loveit, though she expressed an infinite deal of sorrow for the loss of so amiable a companion, could not forbear applauding her resolution in this point ; but Sir Basil would fain have been a little pleasant on the occasion, if the grave looks of Mrs. Munden had not put his raillery to silence. — Perceiving the day was near shut in, she rose to take her leave ; it was in vain that they used all imaginable arguments to persuade her to stay supper ; she told them, that as the coach went out so early, it was necessary for her to take some repose before she entered upon the fatigue of her journey ; — Lady Loveit on this allowed the justice of her plea, and said no more.

The parting of these ladies was very moving ; they embraced again and again, promised to write frequently to each other, and mingled tears as they exchanged farewells. — Sir Basil, who had really a very high esteem for her, was greatly affected, in spite of the gaiety of his temper, on bidding her adieu, and

happy was it for Mrs. Munden that the concern they were both in hindered them from perceiving that confusion, that distraction of mind, which neither she nor Mr. Truworth were able to restrain totally the marks of, as he approached to make her those compliments, which might have been expected on such an occasion, even from a person the most indifferent : his tongue, indeed uttered no more than words of course, but his lips trembled while saluting her ; nor could she in that instant withhold a sigh, which seemed to rend her very heart : — their mutual agitations were, in fine, too great not to be visible to each other, and left neither of them any room to doubt of the extreme force of the passion from which they sprang.

The motive which had made her refuse staying supper at Sir Basil's, was to prevent Mr. Truworth from having any pretence to wait upon her home, not being able to answer how far she could support her character, if exposed to the tender things he might possibly address her with on such an opportunity, and she now found by what she had felt on parting with him, how necessary the precaution was that she had taken.

After a night less engrossed by sleep than

than meditation, she set out for L——c, where she arrived without any ill accident to retard her journey, and was received by Sir Ralph and Lady Trusty with all those demonstrations of joy, which she had reason to expect from the experienced friendship of those worthy persons.

As this was the place of her nativity, and her father had always lived there in very great estimation, the house of Lady Trusty at first was thronged with persons of almost all conditions, who came to pay their compliments to her fair guest; and as no circumstance, no habit could take from her those charms which nature had bestowed upon her, her beauty and amiable qualities soon became the theme of conversation through the whole country.

She was not insensible of the admiration she attracted, but was now far from being elated with it: — all the satisfaction she took out of her dear Lady Trusty's company was, in reading some instructive, or entertaining book, and in the letters of those whom she knew to be her sincere friends; but she had not been much above two months in the country before she received one from a quarter whence she had not expected it. — It

was from Mr. Trueworth, and contained as follows :

To Mrs. MUNDEN,

‘ MADAM,

‘ I HAVE the inexpressible pleasure to
‘ hear that you are well, by those whom
‘ you favour with your correspondence ;
‘ but as they may not think any mention
‘ of me might be agreeable to you, I take
‘ the liberty myself to acquaint you that
‘ I live ; and flatter myself, that informa-
‘ tion is sufficient to make you know, that
‘ I live only to be, with the most firm at-
‘ tachment,

‘ Madam,

‘ Your eternally devoted servant,

‘ C. TRUEWORTH.’

These few lines assuring her of his love, and at the same time of his respect, by his not presuming once to mention the passion of which he was possessed, charmed her to a very high degree, and prepared her heart for another, which in a few weeks after he found a pretence for sending to her ; — it contained these lines,

To Mrs. MUNDEN.

‘ MADAM,

‘ I AM now more unhappy than ever ;
‘ — Lady Loveit is gone out of town,
‘ I have no opportunity of hearing
‘ the

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‘ the only sounds that can bless my longing
‘ ears ; — in pity therefore to my impa-
‘ tience, vouchsafe to let me know you
‘ are in health, — say that you are well,
‘ it is all I ask, — one line will cost you
‘ little pains, and be no breach of that
‘ decorum to which you so strictly adhere,
‘ yet will be a sovereign specific to restore
‘ the tranquility of him, who is, with an
‘ unspeakable regard,

‘ Madam,

‘ Your unalterable,

‘ And devoted servant,

‘ C. TRUEWORTH.

Mrs. Munden found this epistle so rea-
sonable, and withal couched in such re-
spectful terms, that she ought not to refuse
compliance with it, and accordingly wrote
to him in this manner :

To CHARLES TRUEWORTH, Esq;

‘ SIR,

‘ THE generous concern you ex-
‘ press for my welfare, demands a no less
‘ grateful return : — as to my health, it
‘ is no way impaired since I left London ;
‘ nor can my mind labour under any dis-
‘ composure, while my friends continue
‘ to think kindly of me. I am with all
‘ due respect, SIR,

‘ Yours, &c.

‘ B. MUNDEN.

Upon this obliging answer he ventured to write again, intreating her to allow a correspondence with him by letters while she remained in L — e; urging, that this was a favour she could not reasonably deny to any friend, who desired it with the same sincerity she must be convinced he did.

Mrs. Munden paused a little; but finding that neither her virtue, nor her reputation, could any way suffer by granting this request, her heart would not permit her to deny both him and herself so innocent a satisfaction; and by the next post gave him the permission he petitioned for in these words:

TO CHARLES TRUEWORTH, Esq;

SIR,

“ I SHOULD be unjust to myself, as well as ungrateful to the friendship with which you honour me, should I reject any proofs of it that are consistent with my character to receive, and to return: — write, therefore as often as you think proper; and be assured I shall give your letters all the welcome you can wish, provided they contain nothing unsuitable to the present condition of her, who is, as much as you ought to expect, Sir,

Yours, &c.

B. MUNDEN.

After

After this an uninterrupted intercourse of letters continued between them for the whole remainder of the year: — Mr. Truworth was for the most part extremely cautious in what manner he expressed himself, but whenever, as it would sometimes so happen, the warmth of his passion made him transgress the bounds had been prescribed him, she would not seem to understand, because she had no mind to be offended.

Thus equally maintaining that reserve, which she thought the situation she was in demanded, and at the same indulging the tenderness of her heart for a man who so well deserved it, she enjoyed that sweet contentment, which true love alone has the power of bestowing.



C H A P. XXIV.

Is the last, and if the Author's word may be taken for it, the best.

INnocent and pure as the inclinations of Mrs. Munden were, it is highly probable, however, that she was not sorry to see the time arrive, which was to put an end to that cruel constraint her

charming lover had been so long under, and while it gave him leave to declare the whole fervency of the passion he was possessed of, allowed her also to confess her own without a blush.

Mr. Truworth, who had kept an exact account of the time, contrived it so, that a letter from him should reach her hands the very next day after that in which she was to throw off her mourning weeds :—It was in these terms he now wrote :

TO MRS. MUNDEN.

MADAM,

THE year of my probation is expir'd ;
 — I have now fully performed the painful penance you enjoined, and you must expect me shortly at your feet, to claim that recompence which my submission has in some measure merited :—you cannot now, without an injustice contrary to your nature, forbid me to approach you with my vows of everlasting love, nor any longer restrain my impatient lips from uttering the languishments of my adoring heart ; nor can I now content myself with telling you, at the distance of so many miles, how very dear you are to me : — no, you must also read the tender declaration in my eyes, and hear it in my sighs ; — the laws of
 tyrant.

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• tyrant custom have been fulfilled in their
• most rigorous forms, and those of gentler
• love may sure demand an equal share in
• our obedience: — fain would my flatter-
• ing hopes persuade me, that I shall not
• find you a too stubborn rebel to that
• power, to whose authority all nature
• yields a willing homage, and that my
• happiness is a thing of some consequence
• to you:—if I am too presuming, at least
• forgive me, but let your pen assure me
• you do so by the return of the post; 'till
• when I am, with a mixture of transport
• and anxiety,

• MADAM.

• Your passionately devoted,

• And most faithful adorer,

• C. TRUEWORTH.

Though this was no more than Mrs. Munden had expected, it diffused through her whole frame a glow of satisfaction, unknown to those who do not love as she did: — she thought, indeed, as well as he, that there was no need of continuing that cruel constraint, she so long had imposed upon herself, and hesitated not if she should acknowledge what he before had not the least cause to doubt; — the terms which she expressed herself in, were these.

TO CHARLES TRUEWORTH, Esq;

‘ SIR,

‘ I KNOW there is great share of impatience in the composition of your sex, and wonder not at yours: — much less have I any pretence to accuse you of presumption, as you are too well acquainted with the just sensibility I have of your merits not to expect all the marks of it that an honourable passion can require: — an attempt to conceal my heart from you will be vain; — you saw the inmost recesses of it at a time when you should most have been a stranger there; — but what was then my shame to have discovered, is now my glory to avow; and I scruple not to confess, that whatever makes your happiness will confirm mine: — but I must stop here, or when I see you shall have nothing left to add, in return for the pains so long a journey will cost you; — let no anxieties, however, render the way more tedious, but reflect that every step will bring you still nearer to a reception equal to your wishes, from her, who is, with an unfeigned sincerity,

‘ Yours, &c.

‘ B. MUNDEN.’

This

This was the first love-letter she had ever wrote ; and it must be owned that the passion she was inspired with had already made her a pretty good proficient that way ; — but though the prudish part of the sex may perhaps accuse her of having confessed too much, yet those of a more reasonable way of thinking, will be far from pronouncing sentence against her ; — the person of Mr. Truworth, — his admirable endowments, — the services he had done her, might well warrant the tenderness she had for him ; — his birth, his estate, his good character, and her own experience of his many virtues, sufficiently authorized her acceptance of his offers : and it would have been only a piece of idle affectation in her, to have gone about to have concealed her regard for a person whom so many reasons induced her to marry, — especially as chance had so long before betrayed to him her inclination in his favour.

Thus fully justified within herself, and assured of being so hereafter to all her friends, and to the world in general, she indulged the most pleasing ideas of her approaching happiness, without the least mixture of any of those inquietudes, which pride, folly, ill-fortune, or ill-humour too frequently excite, to poison

all the sweets of love, and imbitter the most tender passion.

As she had not made Lady Trusty the confidante of any part of what had passed between her and Mr. Truworth, deterred at first through shame, and afterwards by the uncertainty of his persisting in his addresses, that lady would have been greatly surprized at the extraordinary vivacity which now on a sudden sparkled in her eyes, if there had not been other motives besides the real one, by which she might account for it,

Mrs. Munden had received intelligence that Lady Loveit was safely delivered of a son and heir, and what was yet more interesting to her, that Mr. Thoughtless was married to a young lady of a large fortune, and honourable family; — letters also came from Mr. Francis Thoughtless, acquainting them that he had obtained leave from his colonel to leave the regiment for two whole months, and that after the celebration of his brother's nuptials, he would pass the remainder of his furlow with them in L——e.

These indeed were things which at another time would have highly delighted the mind of Mrs. Munden; but at this, her thoughts

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thoughts were so absorb'd in Mr. Trueworth, whom she now every hour expected, that friendship, and even that natural affection which had hitherto been so distinguishable a part of her character, could now boast of but a second place.

Lady Trusty observing her one day in a more than ordinary chearful humour, took that opportunity of discoursing her on a matter, which had been in her head for some time. — ‘ Mr. Munden has been dead a year,’ said she; ‘ you have paid all that regard to his memory, which could have been expected from you, even for a better husband, and cannot now be blamed for listening to any offers that may be made to your advantage.’ — ‘ Offers, madam!’ cried Mrs. Munden, — ‘ on what score does your ladyship mean?’ — ‘ What others can you suppose,’ replied she gravely, ‘ than those of marriage; — there are two gentlemen who have solicited both Sir Ralph and myself to use our interest with you in their behalf, — neither of them are unworthy your consideration; — the one is Mr. Woodland, whom you have frequently seen here, his estate at present, indeed, is no more than eight hundred pounds a year, but he has great expectations from a rich uncle: — the other is our vicar, who
besides

‘ besides two large benefices, has lately
 ‘ had a windfall of near a thousand pounds
 ‘ a year, by the death of his elder brother,
 ‘ and it is the opinion of most people,
 ‘ that he will be made a bishop on the
 ‘ first vacancy.’

‘ So much the worse, madam,’ said the
 spirituous Mrs. Munden; ‘ for if he takes
 ‘ the due care he ought to do of his dio-
 ‘ cese, he will have little time to think
 ‘ of his wife: — as to Mr. Woodland,
 ‘ indeed, I have but one objection to
 ‘ make, but that is a main one; — I do
 ‘ not like him, and am well assured I
 ‘ never can: — I therefore beg your
 ‘ ladyship, continued she, with an air both
 serious and disdainful, ‘ to advise them
 ‘ to desist all thoughts of me, on the ac-
 ‘ count you mention, and to let them
 ‘ know I did not come to L————e to
 ‘ get a husband, but to avoid all imperti-
 ‘ nent proposals of that kind.’

‘ It is not in L————e, replied
 ‘ Lady Trufty, a little piqued at these last
 ‘ words, ‘ but in London you are to expect
 ‘ proposals deserving this contempt; —
 ‘ here are no false glosses to deceive
 ‘ or impose on the understanding; —
 ‘ here are no pretenders to birth, or to
 ‘ estate, every one is known for what he
 ‘ really is, and none will presume to
 ‘ make

‘ make his addresses to a woman without
 ‘ a consciousness of being qualified to re-
 ‘ ceive the approbation of her friends.

‘ I will not dispute with your ladyship
 ‘ in this point,’ replied Mrs. Munden;—
 ‘ I grant there is less artifice in the coun-
 ‘ try than the town, and should scarce
 ‘ make choice of a man that has been
 ‘ bred, and chuses to reside always in
 ‘ the latter;— but, madam, it is not
 ‘ the place of nativity, nor the birth, nor
 ‘ the estate,— but the person, and the
 ‘ temper of the man can make me truly
 ‘ happy;— I shall always pay a just re-
 ‘ gard to the advice of my friends, and
 ‘ particularly to your ladyship; but as I
 ‘ have been once a sacrifice to their per-
 ‘ suasions, I hope you will have the good-
 ‘ ness to forgive me when I say, that
 ‘ if ever I become a wife again, love,
 ‘ an infinity of love, shall be the chief
 ‘ inducement.’

‘ On whose side?’ cried Lady Trusty,
 hastily; ‘ On both, I hope, madam,’ re-
 plied Mrs. Munden, with a smile. ‘ Take
 ‘ care, my dear,’—rejoined the other;
 ‘ for if you should find yourself de-
 ‘ ceived in that of the man, your own
 ‘ would only serve to render you the
 ‘ more unhappy.’

The fair widow was about to make some answer, which perhaps would have let Lady Trusty into the whole secret of her heart, if the conversation had not been broke off by a very loud ringing of the bell at the great gate of the courtyard before the house; on which, as it was natural for them, they both ran to the window to see what company were coming.

The first object that presented itself to them, was a very neat running footman, who, on the gate being opened, came tripping up towards the house, and was immediately followed by a coach, with one gentleman in it, drawn by six prancing horses, and attended by two servants in rich liveries, and well mounted. Lady Trusty was somewhat surpris'd, as she never had seen either the person in the coach, or the equipage before, but infinitely more so when Mrs. Munden starting from the window, in the greatest confusion imaginable, cried, — ‘ Madam, with your leave, — I will speak to him in the parlour.’ — ‘ Speak to whom?’ said Lady Trusty. — The other had not power to answer, and was running out of the room, when a servant of Sir Ralph’s came up to tell her, a gentleman, who called himself Truworth, was come to wait on her. — ‘ I know, — I know,’

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‘ know,’ cried she, ‘ conduct him into the parlour.’

Prepared as she was by the expectation of his arrival, all her presence of mind was not sufficient to enable her to stand the sudden rush of joy, which on sight of him burst in upon her heart;—nor was he less overcome, — he sprang into her arms, which of themselves opened to receive him, and while he kissed away the tears that trickled from her eyes, his own bedewed her cheeks. — ‘ Oh ‘ have I lived to see you thus!’ — cried he, — ‘ thus ravishingly kind!’ — ‘ And ‘ have I lived,’ rejoined she, ‘ to receive ‘ these proofs of affection from the best ‘ and most ill used of men. — Oh, Trueworth! — Trueworth!’ added she, ‘ I ‘ have not merited this from you.’ — ‘ You merit all things,’ — said he, — ‘ let ‘ us talk no more of what is past, but tell ‘ me that you now are mine; — I came ‘ to make you so by the irrevocable ties ‘ of love and law, and we must now part ‘ no more! — Speak, my angel, — my first, ‘ my last charmer,’ — continued he, perceiving she was silent, blushed, and hung down her head; — ‘ let those dear lips ‘ confirm my happiness, and say the ‘ time is come, that you will be all mine.’ The trembling fair now having gathered a little more assurance, raised her eyes from

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from the earth, and looking tenderly on him,—‘ You know you have my heart,’ cried she, ‘ and cannot doubt my hand.’

After this a considerable time was past in all those mutual endearments, which honour and modesty would permit, without Mrs Munden once remembering the obligations she was under of relieving Lady Trusty from the consternation she had left her in.

That lady had, indeed, heard her servant say who was below, but as Mrs. Munden had never mentioned the name of Mr. Trueworth the whole time she had been with her, and had not any suspicion of the correspondence between them, much less could have the least notion of her affection for a gentleman, whom she had once refused, in spite of the many advantages an alliance with him offered, nothing could be more astonishing to her than this visit, and the disorder with which Mrs. Munden went down to receive it.

She was still ruminating on an event which appeared so extraordinary to her, when the now happy lovers entered the room, and discovered by their countenances, some part of what she wished to
now ;—‘ I beg leave, madam,’ said Mrs.
Munden,

Munden, 'to introduce to your Ladyship,
' a gentleman whose name and character
' you are not unacquainted with, Mr.
' Truworth.'

' I am, indeed, no stranger to both,'
replied Lady Trusty, advancing to receive
him, ' nor to the respect they claim : ' he
returned this compliment with a politeness
which was natural to him ; and after they
were seated, her Ladyship beginning to ex-
press the satisfaction she felt in seeing a
gentleman of whose amiable qualities she
had so high an idea ; — ' Your Ladyship
' does me too much honour, said he, but
' I fear you will repent this goodness,
' when you shall find I am come with an
' intent to rob you of a companion, who
' I know is very dear to you.'

' If you should succeed in the robbery
' you mention,' answered she, smiling,
' you will make me ample atonement
' for it by the pleasure you will give me
' in knowing what I have lost is in such
' good hands.'

Mr. Truworth had no time to make
any reply to these obliging words, Sir
Ralph, who had dined abroad, came in
that instant, not a little surprised to find so
gay an equipage, and altogether unknown
to him, before his door ; but on his lady's

acquainting him with the name of their new guest, welcomed him with a complaisance not at all inferior to what she had shewn — There requires little ceremony between persons of good breeding to enter into a freedom of conversation, and the good old Baronet was beginning to entertain Mr. Trueworth with some discourses, which at another time would have been very agreeable to him; but that obedient lover having undertaken, in order to save the blushes of his fair mistress, to make them fully sensible of the motive, which had brought him into L———, delayed the performance no longer than was necessary to do it without abruptness,

Mrs. Munden, who in desiring he should break the matter, had not meant he should do it suddenly, or in her presence, looked like the sun just starting from a cloud all the time he was speaking, and was ready to die with shame when Sir Ralph said, that since all things were concluded between them, and there was no need for farther courtship, he could not see any reason why their marriage should not be immediately compleated: — but Lady Trusty, in compassion to her fair friend's confusion, opposed this motion. — The next day after the succeeding one, was however appointed without any shew of
reluctance

reluctance on the side of Mrs. Munden, and the inexpressible satisfaction of Mr. Truworth,

He had lain the night before at an inn about eight miles short of Sir Ralph's seat, and as he had no acquaintance either with him or his lady, had intended to make that his home during his stay in the country, but Sir Ralph and lady Trusty would not consent to his departure, and all he could obtain from them was permission to send back his coach, with one servant to take care of the horses,

No proposals having yet been made concerning a settlement for Mrs. Munden, by way of dowry, Mr. Truworth took Sir Ralph aside the next morning, and desired he would send for a lawyer which he immediately did, — a gentleman of that profession happening to live very near, — and on his coming, received such instructions from Mr. Truworth for drawing up the writings, as convinced Sir Ralph both of the greatness of his generosity, and the sincerity of his love to the lady he was about to make his wife.

Expedition having been recommended to the lawyer, he returned soon after dinner with an instrument drawn up in so judicious a manner, that it required not
the

the least alteration ; — while Sir Ralph and Mr. Truworth were locked up with him in order to examine it, Mrs. Munden received no inconsiderable addition to the present satisfaction of her mind ; by the arrival of her brother Frank : — after the first welcome being given, — ‘ You are “ come, Captain,” said lady Trufty, ‘ just ‘ time enough to be a witness of your ‘ sister’s marriage, which is to be celebrated tomorrow.’ — ‘ Marriage, cried he, — “ and without acquainting either ‘ of her brothers with her intentions ! — ‘ but I hope,” continued he, ‘ it is not ‘ to disadvantage, as your ladyship seems ‘ not displeased at it.’ — ‘ I assure you, ‘ Captain,’ resumed lady Trufty, ‘ I knew ‘ nothing of the affair ’till yesterday, nor ‘ had ever seen before the gentleman your ‘ sister has made choice of ; but love and ‘ destiny, added she, ‘ are not to be resisted.’ These words, and the serious ‘ air she assumed in speaking them, giving him cause to fear his sister was going to throw herself away, he shook his head, and seemed in a good deal of uneasiness, but had not an opportunity to testify what he felt, any otherwise than by his looks. — Sir Ralph and Mr. Truworth in that instant entered the room ; — the extreme surprize he was in at the sight of the latter, was such as prevented him from paying him respects to either in the man-

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ner: he would have done, if more master of himself; but Mr. Truworth easily guessing the emotions of his mind, lock'd him in his arms, saying, --- 'Dear Frank, 'I shall at last be so happy as to call you 'brother.' --- 'Heavens, is it possible! --- cried he, 'Am I awake? or is this 'illusion?' --- then running to Mrs. Munden, 'Sister,' said he, 'is what I hear a 'real fact! are you indeed to be married 'to Mr. Truworth?' --- 'You hear I 'am,' answered she smiling, 'and hear it 'from a mouth not accustomed to de- 'ceit; he then flew to Mr. Truworth, crying, 'My dear, dear Truworth, I 'little hoped this honour: --- then turning to lady Trusty, --- 'Oh madam, said he, 'how agreeably have you deceived me!' 'I knew it would be so,' --- replied she, yet 'I told you nothing but the truth.'

The extravagance of the young Captain's joy being a little over, Mr. Truworth presented Mrs. Munden with the parchment he had received from the lawyer, --- 'What is this?' demanded she: --- 'Take it, take it,' cried Sir Ralph, 'it is 'no less than a settlement of eight hundred pounds a year on you, in case of 'accidents.' --- 'I accept it, Sir,' said Mrs. Munden to Mr. Truworth, 'as a fresh 'proof of your affection, but heaven 'forbid I should ever live to receive any
' othe

‘other advantage from it.’ — He kissed her hand with the most tender transports on these obliging words; ----- after which, they all seated themselves, and never was there a joy more perfect and sincere than what each of this worthy company gave demonstrations of in their respective characters. The next morning completed the wishes of the enamoured pair, and the satisfaction of their friends.

An account of this event was dispatched the next post to all, who had any welfare in the interest of the new wedded lovers; — Mr. Thoughtless, though very much engrossed by his own happiness, could not but rejoice in the good fortune of his sister: — Sir Basil, who since his thorough knowledge of Mrs. Munden, had a high esteem for her, was extremely glad, but his lady was warm even to an excess in her congratulations: in fine, there were few of her acquaintance who did not in some measure take part in their felicity.

Thus were the virtues of our heroine, (those follies that had defaced them being fully corrected) at length rewarded with a happiness, retarded only ’till she had render’d herself wholly worthy of receiving it.

F I N I S.



